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General Literature, and Art.

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER VI.

MOTHER CHATTOX.

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Many merry groups were scattered about, talking, laughing, and singing; but two persons, seemingly objects of suspicion and alarm, and shunned by every one who crossed their path, were advancing slowly towards the three crosses of Paullinus, which stood in a line not far from the church-porch. They were females, one about five-and-twenty, very comely, and habited in smart holiday attire, put on with considerable rustic coquetry, so as to display a very neat foot and ankle, and with plenty of ribands in her fine chestnut hair. The other was a very different person, far advanced in years, bent almost double, palsy-stricken, her arms and limbs shaking, her head nodding, her chin wagging, her snowy locks hanging about her wrinkled visage, her brow and upper lip frore, and her eyes almost sightless, the pupils being cased with a thin white film. Her dress, of antiquated make and faded stuff, had been once deep red in colour, and her old black hat was high-crowned and broad-brimmed. She partly aided herself in walking with a crutch-handled stick, and partly leaned upon her younger companion for support.

"Why, there is one of the old women we have just been speaking of —Mother Chattox," said Richard, pointing them out, "and with her, her granddaughter, pretty Nan Redferne."

"So it is," cried Nicholas; "what makes the old hag here, I marvel! I will go question her."

So saying, he strode quickly towards her.

"How now, Mother Chattox!" he cried. "What mischief is afoot? What makes the darkness-loving owl abroad in the glare of day? What brings the grisly she-wolf from her forest lair? Back to thy den, old witch. Art crazed as well as blind and palsied, that thou knowest not that this is a merry-making, and not a devil's sabbath? Back to thy hut, I say! These sacred precincts are no place for thee."

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"Who is it speaks to me?" demanded the old hag, halting, and fixing her glazed eyes upon him.

"One thou hast much injured," replied Nicholas. "One into whose house thou hast brought quick-wasting sickness and death by thy infernal arts. One thou hast good reason to fear, for, learn to thy confusion, thou damned and murtherous witch, it is Nicholas, brother to thy victim, Richard Assheton of Downham, who speaks to thee."

"I know none I have reason to fear," replied Mother Chattox; "especially thee, Nicholas Assheton. Thy brother was no victim of mine. Thou wert the gainer by his death, not I. Why should I slay him?"

"I will tell thee why, old hag," cried Nicholas; "he was inflamed by the beauty of thy granddaughter Nancy here, and it was to please Tom Redferne, her sweetheart then, but her spouse since, that thou bewitchedst him to death."

"That reason will not avail thee, Nicholas," rejoined Mother Chattox, with a derisive laugh. "If I had any hand in his death, it was to serve and pleasure thee, and that all men shall know, if I am questioned on the subject—ha! ha! Take me to the crosses, Nance."

"Thou shalt not 'scape thus, thou murtherous hag," cried Nicholas, furiously.

"Nay, let her go her way," said Richard, who had drawn near during the colloquy. "No good will come of meddling with her."

"Who's that?" asked Mother Chattox, quickly.

"Master Richard Assheton, o' Middleton," whispered Nan Redferne.

"Another of these accursed Asshetons," cried Mother Chattox. "A plague seize them!"

"Boh he's weel-favourt an kindly," remarked her granddaughter.

"Well-favoured or not, kindly or cruel, I hate them all," cried Mother Chattox. "To the crosses, I say."

But Nicholas placed himself in their path.

"Is it to pray to Beelzebub, thy master, that thou wouldst go to the crosses?" he asked.

"Out of my way, pestilent fool!" cried the hag.

"Thou shalt not stir till I have had an answer," rejoined Nicholas. "They say those are Runic obelisks, and not Christian crosses, and that the carvings upon them have a magical signification. The first, it is averred, is written o'er with deadly curses, and the forms in which they are traced, as serpentine, triangular, or round, indicate and rule their swift or slow effect. The second bears charms against diseases, storms, and lightning. And on the third is inscribed a verse which will render him who can read it rightly invisible to mortal view. Thou shouldst be learned in such lore, old Pythoness. Is it so?"

The hag's chin wagged fearfully, and her frame trembled with passion, but she spoke not.

"Have you been in the church, old woman?" interposed Richard.

"Ay, wherefore?" she rejoined.

"Some one has placed a cypress wreath on Abbot Paslew's grave. Was it you?" he asked.

"What! hast thou found it?" cried the hag. "It shall bring thee rare luck, lad—rare luck. Now let me pass."

"Not yet," cried Nicholas, forcibly grasping her withered arm.

The hag uttered a scream of rage.

"Let me go, Nicholas Assheton," she shrieked, "or thou shalt rue it.

Cramps and aches shall wring and rack thy flesh and bones; fever shall consume thee; ague shake thee—shake thee—ha!"

And Nicholas recoiled, appalled by her fearful gestures.

"You carry your malignity too far, old woman," said Richard, severely.

"And thou darest tell me so?" cried the hag. "Set me before him, Nance, that I may curse him," she added, raising her palsied arm.

"Nah, nah—yo'n cursed ower much already, grandmother," cried Nan Redferne, endeavouring to drag her away. But the old woman resisted.

"I will teach him to cross my path," she vociferated, in accents shrill and jarring as the cry of the goat-sucker. "Handsome he is, it may be now, but he shall not be so long. The bloom shall fade from his cheek, the fire be extinguished in his eyes, the strength depart from his limbs. Sorrow shall be her portion who loves him—sorrow and shame!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Richard, endeavouring to exclude the voice of the crone, which pierced his ears like some sharp instrument.

"Ha! ha! you fear me now," she cried. "By this, and this, the spell shall work," she added, describing a circle in the air with her stick, then crossing it twice, and finally scattering over him a handful of grave-dust, snatched from an adjoining hillock. "Now lead me quickly to the smaller cross, Nance," she added, in a low tone.

Her granddaughter complied, with a glance of deep commiseration at Richard, who remained stupified at the ominous proceeding.

"Ah! this must indeed be a witch!" he cried, recovering from the momentary shock.

"So you are convinced at last," rejoined Nicholas. "I can take breath now the old hell-cat is gone. But she shall not escape us. Keep an eye upon her, while I see if Simon Sparshot, the beadle, be within the churchyard, and if so he shall take her into custody, and lock her in the cage."

With this, he ran towards the throng, shouting lustily for the beadle. Presently a big, burly fellow, in a scarlet doublet, laced with gold, a black velvet cap trimmed with red ribands, yellow hose, and shoes with great roses in them, and bearing a long silver-headed staff, answered the summons, and upon being told why his services were required, immediately roared out at the top of a stentorian voice, "A witch, lads!—a witch!"

All was astir in an instant. Robin Hood and his merry men, with the morris-dancers, rushed out of their bowers, and the whole churchyard was in agitation. Above the din was heard the loud voice of Simon Sparshot still shouting, "A witch!—a witch!—Mother Chattox!"

"Where—where?" demanded several voices.

"Yonder," replied Nicholas, pointing to the further cross.

A general movement took place in that direction, the crowd being headed by the squire and the beadle, but when they came up, they found only Nan Redferne standing behind the obelisk.

"Where the devil is the old witch gone, Dick?" cried Nicholas, in dismay.

"I thought I saw her standing there with her granddaughter," replied Richard; "but in truth I did not watch very closely."

"Search for her—search for her," cried Nicholas.

But neither behind the crosses, nor behind any monument, nor in any

hole or corner, nor on the other side of the churchyard wall, nor at the back of the little hermitage or chapel, though all were quickly examined, could the old hag be found.

On being questioned, Nan Redferne refused to say aught concerning her grandmother's flight or place of concealment.

"I begin to think there is some truth in that strange legend of the cross," said Nicholas. "Notwithstanding her blindness, the old hag must have managed to read the magic verse upon it, and so have rendered herself invisible. But we have got the young witch safe."

"Yeigh, squoire!" responded Sparshot, who had seized hold of Nance —"hoo be safe enough."

"Nan Redferne is no witch," said Richard Assheton, authoritatively.

"Neaw witch, Mester Ruchot!" cried the beadle, in amazement.

"No more than any of these lasses around us," said Richard. "Release her, Sparshot."

"I forbid him to do so, till she has been examined," cried a sharp voice. And the next moment Master Potts was seen pushing his way through the crowd. "So you have found a witch, my masters. I heard your shouts, and hurried on as fast as I could. Just in time, Master Nicholas—just in time," he added, rubbing his hands gleefully.

"Lemme go, Simon," besought Nance.

"Neaw, neaw, lass, that munnot be," rejoined Sparshot.

"Help—save me, Master Richard!" cried the young woman.

By this time the crowd had gathered round her, yelling, hooting, and shaking their hands at her, as if about to tear her in pieces; but Richard Assheton planted himself resolutely before her, and pushed back the foremost of them.

"Remove her instantly to the Abbey, Sparshot," he cried, "and let her be kept in safe custody till Sir Ralph has time to examine her. Will that content you, masters?"

"Neaw—neaw," responded several rough voices; "swim her!—swim her!"

"Quite right, my worthy friends, quite right," said Potts. "*Primo*, let us make sure she is a witch—*secundo*, let us take her to the Abbey."

"There can be no doubt as to her being a witch, Master Potts," rejoined Nicholas; "her old granddame, Mother Chattox, has just vanished from our sight."

"Has Mother Chattox been here?" cried Potts, opening his round eyes to their widest extent.

"Not many minutes since," replied Nicholas. "In fact, she may be here still for aught I know."

"Here!—where?" cried Potts, looking round.

"You won't discover her, for all your quickness," replied Nicholas. "She has rendered herself invisible, by reciting the magical verses inscribed on that cross."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the attorney, closely examining the mysterious inscriptions. "What strange, uncouth characters! I can make neither head nor tail, unless it be the devil's tail, of them."

At this moment, a whoop was raised by Jem Device, who, having taken his little sister home, had returned to the sports on the green, and now formed part of the assemblage in the churchyard. Between the rival witch potentates, Mothers Demdike and Chattox, it has already been said, a deadly enmity existed, and the feud was carried on with

equal animosity by their descendants; and though Jem himself came under the same suspicion as Nan Redferne, that circumstance created no tie of interest between them, but the contrary, and he was the most active of her assailants. He had set up the above-mentioned cry from observing a large rat running along the side of the wall.

"Theere hoo goes," whooped Jem; "t' owd witch, i' th' shape ov a rotten!—loo-loo-loo!"

Half the crowd started in pursuit of the animal, and twenty sticks were thrown at it, but a stone cast by Jem stayed its progress, and it was instantly despatched. It did not change, however, as was expected by the credulous hinds, into an old woman, and they gave vent to their disappointment and rage in renewed threats against Nan Redferne. The dead rat was hurled at her by Jem, but missing its mark, it hit Master Potts on the head, and nearly knocked him off the cross, upon which he had mounted to obtain a better view of the proceedings. Irritated by this circumstance, as well as by the failure of the experiment, the little attorney jumped down, and fell to kicking the unfortunate rat, after which, his fury being somewhat appeased, he turned to Nance, who had sunk for support against the pedestal, and said to her—"If you will tell us what has become of the old witch your grandmother, and undertake to bear witness against her, you shall be set free."

"Ey'n tell ye nowt, mon," replied Nance, doggedly. "Put me to onny trial ye like, ye shanna get a word fro me."

"That remains to be seen," retorted Potts; "but I apprehend we shall make you speak, and pretty plainly too, before we've done with you. —You hear what this perverse and wrong-headed young witch declares, masters," he shouted, again clambering upon the cross. "I have offered her liberty, on condition of disclosing to us the manner of her diabolical old relative's evasion, and she rejects it."

An angry roar followed, mixed with cries, from Jem Device, of "Swim her!—swim her."

"You had better tell them what you know, Nance," said Richard, in a low tone, "or I shall have difficulty in preserving you from their fury."

"Ey darena, Master Richard," she replied, shaking her head; and then she added, firmly, "Ey winna."

Finding it useless to reason with her, and fearing also that the infuriated crowd might attempt to put their threats into execution, Richard turned to his cousin Nicholas, and said: "We must get her away, or violence will be done."

"She does not deserve your compassion, Dick," replied Nicholas; "she is only a few degrees better than the old hag who has escaped. Sparshot here tells me she is noted for her skill in modelling clay figures."

"Yeigh, that hoo be," replied the broad-faced beadle; "hoo's unaccountable cliver ot that sort o' wark. A clay figger os big os a six months' barn, fashiont i' th' likeness o' Farmer Grimble, o' Briercliffe lawnd, os died last month, war seen i' her cottage, an monny others besoide. Amongst 'em a moddle o' your lamented brother, Squoire Ruchot Assheton o' Downham, wi' t' yeod pood off, an th' 'eart pierct thro' an' thro' wi' pins and needles."

"Ye lien i' your teeth, Simon Sparshot!" cried Nance, regarding him furiously.

"If the head were off, Simon, I don't see how the likeness to my poor

brother could well be recognised," said Nicholas, with a half-smile. "But let her be put to some mild trial—weighed against the church Bible."

"Be it so," replied Potts, jumping down; "but if that fail, we must have recourse to stronger measures. Take notice that, with all her fright, she has not been able to shed a tear, not a single tear—a clear witch—a clear witch!"

"Ey'd scorn to weep fo t' like o' yo!" cried Nance, disdainfully, having now completely recovered her natural audacity.

"We'll soon break your spirit, young woman, I can promise you," rejoined Potts.

As soon as it was known what was about to occur, the whole crowd moved towards the church porch, Nan Redferne walking between Richard Assheton and the beadle, who kept hold of her arm to prevent any attempt at escape; and by the time they reached the appointed place, Ben Baggiley, the baker, who had been despatched for the purpose, appeared with an enormous pair of wooden scales, while Sampson Harrop, the clerk, having visited the pulpit, came forth with the church Bible, an immense volume, bound in black, with great silver clasps.

"Come, that's a good big Bible at all events," cried Potts, eyeing it with satisfaction. "It looks like my honourable and singular good Lord Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke's learned 'Institutes of the Laws of England,' only that that great legal tome is generally bound in calf—law-calf, as we say."

"Large as the book is it will scarce prove heavy enough to weigh down the witch, I opine," observed Nicholas, with a smile.

"We shall see, sir," replied Potts. "We shall see."

By this time, the scales having been affixed to a hook in the porch by Baggiley, the sacred volume was placed on one side, and Nance set down by the beadle on the other. The result of the experiment was precisely what might have been anticipated—the moment the young woman took her place in the balance, it sank down to the ground, while the other kicked the beam.

"I hope you are satisfied now, Master Potts," cried Richard Assheton. "By your own trial her innocence is approved."

"Your pardon, Master Richard, this is Squire Nicholas's trial, not mine," replied Potts. "I am for the ordeal of swimming. How say you, masters! Shall we be content with this doubtful experiment?"

"Neaw—neaw," responded Jem Device, who acted as spokesman to the crowd;" "swim her—swim her."

"I knew you would have it so," said Potts, approvingly. "Where is a fitting place for the trial?"

"Th' Abbey pool is nah fur off," replied Jem, "or ye con tay her to th' Calder."

"The river, by all means—nothing like a running stream," said Potts. "Let cords be procured to bind her."

"Run fo 'em quickly, Ben," said Jem to Baggiley, who was very zealous in the cause.

"Oh!" groaned Nance, again losing courage, and glancing piteously at Richard.

"No outrage like this shall be perpetrated," cried the young man, firmly; "I call upon you, cousin Nicholas, to help me. Go into the church," he added, thrusting Nance backward, and presenting his sword at the breast of Jem Device, who attempted to follow her, and who

retired muttering threats and curses. "I will run the first man through the body who attempts to pass."

As Nan Redferne made good her retreat, and shut the church-door after her, Master Potts, pale with rage, cried out to Richard, "You have aided the escape of a desperate and notorious offender—actually in custody, sir, and have rendered yourself liable to indictment for it, sir, with consequences of fine and imprisonment, sir—heavy fine and long imprisonment, sir. Do you mark me, Master Richard?"

"I will answer the consequences of my act to those empowered to question it, sir," replied Richard, sternly.

"Well, sir, I have given you notice," rejoined Potts; "due notice. We shall hear what Sir Ralph will say to the matter, and Master Roger Nowell, and——"

"You forget me, good Master Potts," interrupted Nicholas, laughingly; "I entirely disapprove of it. It is a most flagrant breach of duty. Nevertheless, I am glad the poor wench has got off."

"She is safe within the church," said Potts, "and I command Master Richard, in the king's name, to let us pass. Beadle! Sharpshot, Sparshot, or whatever be your confounded name, do your duty, sirrah. Enter the church, and bring forth the witch."

"Ey darna, mester," replied Simon; "young Mester Ruchot ud slit mey weasand os soon os look ot meh."

Richard put an end to further altercation by stepping back quickly, locking the door, and then taking out the key, and putting it into his pocket.

"She is quite safe now," he cried, with a smile at the discomfited lawyer.

"Is there no other door?" inquired Potts of the beadle, in a low tone.

"Yeigh, theere been one ot t'other soide," replied Sparshot, "boh it be locked, ey reckon, an maybe hoo'n getten out that way."

"Quick, quick, and let's see," cried Potts; "justice must not be thwarted in this shameful manner."

While the greater part of the crowd set off after Potts and the beadle, Richard Assheton, anxious to know what had become of the fugitive, and determined not to abandon her while any danger existed, unlocked the church door, and entered the holy structure, followed by Nicholas. On looking around, Nance was nowhere to be seen, neither did she answer to his repeated calls, and Richard concluded she must have escaped, when all at once a loud exulting shout was heard without, leaving no doubt that the poor young woman had again fallen into the hands of her captors. The next moment a sharp, piercing scream in a female key confirmed the supposition. On hearing this cry, Richard instantly flew to the opposite door, through which Nance must have passed, but on trying it he found it fastened outside, and filled with sudden misgiving, for he now recollected leaving the key in the other door, he called to Nicholas to come with him, and hurried back to it. His apprehensions were verified; the door was locked. At first Nicholas was inclined to laugh at the trick played them; but a single look from Richard checked his tendency to merriment, and he followed his young relative, who had sprung to a window looking upon that part of the churchyard whence the shouts came, and flung it open. Richard's egress, however, was prevented by an iron bar, and he called out loudly and fiercely to the beadle, whom he saw standing in the midst of the crowd, to unlock the door.

"Have a little patience, good Master Richard," replied Potts, turning up his provoking little visage, now charged with triumphant malice. "You shall come out presently. We are busy just now—engaged in binding the witch, as you see. Both keys are safely in my pocket, and I will send you one of them when we start for the river, good Master Richard. We lawyers are not to be overreached, you see—ha! ha!"

"You shall repent this conduct when I do get out," cried Richard, furiously. "Sparshot, I command you to bring the key instantly."

But, encouraged by the attorney, the beadle affected not to hear Richard's angry vociferations, and the others were unable to aid the young man, if they had been so disposed, and all were too much interested in what was going forward to run off to the vicarage, and acquaint Sir Ralph with the circumstances in which his relatives were placed, even though enjoined to do so.

On being set free by Richard, Nance had flown quickly through the church, and passed out at the side door, and was making good her retreat at the back of the edifice, when her flying figure was descried by Jem Device, who, failing in his first attempt, had run round that way, fancying he should catch her.

He instantly dashed after her with all the fury of a bloodhound, and being possessed of remarkable activity, speedily overtook her, and, heedless of her threats and entreaties, secured her.

"Lemme go, Jem," she cried, "an ey win do thee a good turn one o' these days, when theaw may chonce to be i' th' same strait os me." But seeing him inexorable, she added, "My granddame shan rack thy boans, sorely, lad, for this."

Jem replied by a coarse laugh of defiance, and dragging her along, delivered her to Master Potts and the beadle, who were then hurrying to the other door of the church. To prevent interruption, the cunning attorney, having ascertained that the two Asshetons were inside, instantly gave orders to have both doors locked, and the injunctions being promptly obeyed, he took possession of the keys himself, chuckling at the success of the stratagem. "A fair reprisal," he muttered; "this young milksop shall find he is no match for a skilful lawyer like me. Now, the cords—the cords!"

It was at sight of the bonds, which were quickly brought by Baggiley, that Nance uttered the piercing cry that had roused Richard's indignation. Feeling secure of his prisoner, and now no longer apprehensive of interruption, Master Potts was in no hurry to conclude the arrangements, but rather prolonged them to exasperate Richard. Little consideration was shown the unfortunate captive. The new shoes and stockings of which she had been so vain a short time before, were torn from her feet and limbs by the rude hands of the remorseless Jem and the beadle, and bent down by the main force of these two strong men, her thumbs and great toes were tightly bound together, crosswise, by the cords. The churchyard rang with her shrieks, and with his blood boiling with indignation at the sight, Richard redoubled his exertions to burst through the window and fly to her assistance. But, though Nicholas now lent his powerful aid to the task, their combined efforts to obtain liberation were unavailing; and with rage almost amounting to frenzy, Richard beheld the poor young woman borne shrieking away by her captors. Nor was Nicholas much less incensed, and he swore a deep oath when he did get at liberty that Master Potts should pay dearly for his rascally conduct.

THE APPARITION.

BEING THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me:—art thou anything?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That mak'st my blood cold and my hair to stare?
Speak to me, what thou art. *Julius Cæsar.*

It may readily be imagined, from the pursuits of the writer of these sketches, that he must be not unfrequently thrown into the society of others of his brethren who, like himself, during their viatic experience, have met with a great variety of remarkable occurrences. Incidents which, from their singularity, far removed from commonplace events, and as illustrative of how much of the wonderful there is in the real, may be justly considered to possess sufficient interest to render them worthy of a chronicler.

Having given a few of the most remarkable events connected with his own experience, the writer purposes occasionally to introduce others derived from various members of his brotherhood.

Travellers, abroad or at home, ever have, and ever will tell strange stories. The wanderer, on his return, when surrounded by friends at the winter's hearth, has sometimes the misfortune to have amongst the hearers of the perhaps eventful narrative of his travels, some who are "dry as dust" matter-of-fact people, whose lives are as unvaried, uneventful, and methodical as that of a millhorse, and who receive with doubt and suspicion everything which, at the first blush, is not as clear and palpable as two and two making four, or ten being the half of twenty.

There are many, like the aged mamma of the returned tar, who, wishing to be informed of the wonderful things he had witnessed, heard, amidst other strange matters, that he had seen flying fish, which remarkable feature in natural history the old dame exhibited her acumen by at once discrediting. But when disbelieving the truths he told, and thereby forcing him to draw freely on the stores of his imagination, he discoursed most eloquently about mountains of sugar, prairies of silver, and rivers of rich red wine, then was he met with ready belief; for of a verity the old dame, *arrectis auribus*, listened and believed; for she knew that there were such things as sugar, silver, and wine, nor did she require one to rise from the dead to tell her they came from somewhere.

Such doubters and such believers who reject and receive that alone which they can or cannot reconcile to their limited knowledge and understanding, are the class for whom tales of the impossible are told, and who choose the dross, whilst the sterling ore lays at their feet unnoticed.

Believing, however, as I do, that my readers have not exercised such ratiocination as the old woman's, but have judged of the veracity by the internal evidence which these incidents have hitherto borne; so I content myself if, by the same ordeal, those about to be presented shall be estimated.

It is deemed necessary to make these remarks in preface to the strange event of "The Apparition" about to be related, as it contains matter that may be certainly pronounced to be somewhat of the marvellous. The principal actor therein, who is still living, had arrived at an advanced period of life when he communicated the circumstances of the spiritual visitation herein recounted, and from his being of a reserved disposition, and little given to conversation, from the earnestness of his manner, combined with the truthful and anxious expression of his countenance whilst describing the strange event, I was left but little room to exercise doubt as to the truth of his very remarkable narrative.

As, however, this paper will be devoted to the mystic and a spiritual visitation, the writer wishes it to be understood that he simply gives the story as he heard it; and although such a giant in intellect as the author of "Rassellas" believed in visits to earth by the denizens of spirit-land; and Walter Scott, again, who was as confirmed a believer as the great lexicographer himself, or as any lad that ever whistled to keep his courage up; he is himself a non-convert, and very decided in his disbelief in such visitations. Indeed, for his part, although two such luminaries in the hemisphere of mind have been mentioned as having faith in the theory, the writer must confess, that he should be inclined to form a lower estimate than he otherwise might of any one who would for a moment hesitate to declare that he had not the slightest belief in the existence of any part or portion of the ghosty world. This is said, too, with a perfect recollection of the language which, embodying his own sentiments, the great moralist alluded to put in the mouth of Imlac.

"If all your fear be of apparitions," said the prince, "I will promise you safety; there is no danger from the dead. He that is once buried will be seen no more."

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related or believed. This opinion, which prevails, as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears."

Belief in such things is, I am well aware, far from uncommon. In my younger days I had ample illustration of the existence of such fearful faith in an agricultural district not a hundred miles distant from the banks of the beautiful Wye. Some very worthy country friends—a family whose progenitors, centuries ago, held the same delightful domain on which they now reside, and which has descended from sire to son, to use a phrase of the locality, "time out of mind"—were wont, on my visits to their hospitable fireside, whenever on a winter's night the conversation might that way turn, with facts in formidable array to combat my avowed scepticism as to the existence of ghostery. I believe my worthy friends regarded only as the exuberance of young wordy courage my often expressed desire to behold one of those interesting beings, which were said to flit at night about the neighbourhood, occasionally revealing themselves to those who

were indiscreet enough to venture, after nightfall, near the precincts where these night wanderers were known to beat their rounds.

There were two places, I well remember, where it was said no mortal might at night venture to tarry with impunity. One was a particular spot on the turnpike road which, according to tradition, had been the scene of a murder; the other was in a wood which, traversed by a foot-path, afforded a short road from the adjacent town to some of the neighbouring villages, and of which, in the garish day, the natives always availed themselves, but by night, save when under the influence of something as inspiring as the juice of the Tuscan grape, never.

The wood in question was, and I have no doubt still is, haunted by the spirit of a long, long since defunct gentleman, popularly known by the euphonious appellation of "Old Vaughan." Extraordinary were the freaks which this perturbed spirit was wont to perform. Right wonderful were the shapes in which he had frequently appeared to the good people of the neighbourhood around. In some instances, he had revealed himself to travellers on the highway, which, it should be mentioned, passed through a part of the old gentleman's domain when he was in the flesh, and to which, as well as hamlet, wood, and dusky dell, his ghostly peregrinations sometimes extended.

The very startling eccentricities of this mystic and erratic spirit, and the wonderful feats by it performed, were, and I doubt not still are, faithfully chronicled and fearfully told by those who vegetate in the villages around. Nay, there was one startling fact connected with this spirit's restless movements, that I must confess, at the first blush, nonplussed my then inexperienced self, and that was the appearance, in summer and winter alike, of two palpable footprints, clearly defined at the foot of a tree. Now, this tree grew near to the footpath which traversed the wood before alluded to, and the impressions were such, as any *homo* standing with his back against the trunk of the said tree, and looking towards the path, would leave behind. The most remarkable feature in the case, and which the reader may suppose was forcibly dwelt upon by the believers, was the fact that although the grass grew in luxuriance around, not a single blade was ever known to spring in either of these significant footprints.

The reader will hardly be so obtuse as not at once to divine the cause of this. It was, of course, the spot where, in the hours "when churchyards yawn, and graves give up their dead," that restless spirit, yclept "Old Vaughan," took up his post, affording him as it did an opportunity of seeing any mortal who might pass that way. As has been already observed, however, although the path through the said wood offered a much shorter road from the town to the adjacent villages, it was by night carefully avoided, save now and then by some valiant son of the soil, rendered daring by potations deep. Such an one hath made the venture, and lived, too, to tell the tale; but never, even in his cups, again hath he dared the dangers of the dreary wood. What he then saw, is it not known at the cottage hearths? and is it not chronicled and fearfully told, that from that hour he has become a changed man?

Never shall I forget hearing, from the lips of one of these daring adventurers, a graphic account of a funeral procession beheld by him in the said wood. The mournful cavalcade, with all the paraphernalia of sombre trappings, took its way over the tree-tops 'neath the light of a crescent moon,

whilst music, deep, solemn, and mournful as ever swelled through holy aisle, accompanied it in its appalling progress. To his dying day will he, who was thus favoured by beholding the mysterious spectacle, assert and believe it was no dream. I must in candour confess, although the relator admitted it was something more than one or two glasses of treble-X, flanked by more than a thimbleful of mountain-dew, that had fired his courage to dare the passage of the wood, yet did the result of an examination of his phrenological index show the organ of imagination to be anything but largely developed. A firm believer was he that reality and no delusion was the tale he told; and in justice I must say, that although laughing at the story, I was constrained to admit that the narrator was a sterling character of worth and probity.

It is scarcely requisite to observe that his courage being artificially produced, was of a very temporary character, and, once having given way, his mind's eye became filled with strange visions; in such a moment a turbid brain and obfuscated visional organs will readily draw and paint images "palpable;" nor should I have been surprised if, instead of an account of a funeral procession, the bacchanalian ghost-defier had been prepared with an elaborate account of his visit to spirit-land, with minute particulars of the general habits and social economy of the inhabitants. The footprints to which I have alluded, no doubt, still remain under the same tree; and the fact of a blade of grass refusing therein to grow, may in some measure be accounted for, by the existence of the same spirit which would perchance lead you, gentle reader, having the opportunity, to seat yourself where a king had sat before you; and similarly influenced, the rustic by day often takes his stand in the footprints of the perturbed spirit he so much dreads, and which, in the shadowy night, he knows will in the self-same spot take up his position, and in the dark wood bid "congenial horrors, hail!"

As experiences in ghost-seeing may be said to be the subject of this paper, ere proceeding with the strange account of the apparition, I will briefly offer to the reader an adventure of my own, that occurred not many years ago, and which will be found to be not altogether without interest.

The churchyard of K—— is very prettily situated in the suburbs, and afford a delightful view of the very picturesque neighbourhood of that small yet interesting country-town. A wide gravel-path sweeps gracefully around, and takes again a course through the elevated centre of the churchyard, close to the old edifice, whose spire is the very counterpart of that of Harrow-on-the-Hill. Seen from a distance, the tapering part of the sacred structure, pointing the way to Heaven, appears to rise from a clump of trees. These, however, are plentifully scattered over the churchyard, bordering the wide path almost in every part; noble trees they are, whose branches form a delightful canopy over the footway, whilst, on the other side, they extend their shade, and shed their autumn tribute of leaves, like tears, over many a monument and lonely grave.

The words of the solitary-hearted Jacques were ever brought forcibly to my recollection whene'er, at eventide, I looked upon or sauntered beneath the branches of these trees—

> Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
> Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time.

But to my adventure. It was during one of my visits to K—— that, one fine moonlight night, I sallied forth from my inn, with the intention of enjoying a walk through the churchyard I have described, which is situate some half mile from the town, and which I judged would present a pleasing picture, seen by the pale light of the moon. A large fair had been held in the place during the day, and as I passed through the streets there were the customary features displayed at the close of a country-man's gala-day. Here and there were groups of merry rustics, all more or less under the influence of the rosy god; some valiant in proffer of battle to present or imaginary foes; others resisting the persuasion and entreaties of their less inebriated companions, who were urging the home-ward retreat. From the lower class of public-houses issued peals of rude merriment, or the more discordant sounds of many voices in angry quarrel. Here and there, like a vessel destitute of rudder, helm, or sail, rolled about the pavement some drunken boor, bereft of all the superior attributes of humanity which he might, in his sober moments, have possessed over the beast of the field.

How delightful was it to leave behind me the sights and sounds of such rude revelry!—the shout of inebriety, the idiotic laugh and fierce quarrel engendered by the brimming cup! How calm, how eloquent, appeared the great dome of heaven! how pure, how beautiful, the soft light of the tranquil moon! how still, how peaceful, the sleeping earth! What a change from town to country, from Man to Nature! How full of great teaching her language! how wonderful, and how solemn! The pomp, pride, and circumstance of human life, its joys, its griefs, its greatnesses, its achievements, call them from the shadowy past; from the stores and hoards of old Time, or summon them from the living present; pass them before the mind's eye, and let the scene of such review be in solitude, beneath the jewelled dome of heaven, in the stilly night; and, oh! what littleness! how shrink they into nothingness before these stupendous, and beautiful, and unfathomable mysteries, that pass not away, that fade not, die not, that seem in their beauty and their grandeur to be eternal! Let the historian in such an hour recal the mighty empires on which the stars of heaven have shed their light, dynasties which have passed away for ever, palaces, temples, and homes of men, numerous as leaves of a forest, of which are no traces left; and others, the mementos of which are crumbling away in desert spots, and deserted by men for evermore, their glories forgotten, or waning to oblivion on the page of history. Let the poet at such a time recal the bards of old; let him remember how genius hath gazed upon those bright orbs upon which he now gazes; that they, too, have felt the influence of, and struck the lyre to, those mystic fires of heaven. Let him recal their bardic fame, their glory. Where are they now? Generation hath followed generation; the tide of human life still rolls on, wave after wave breaking upon the shore of death; myriads and myriads of hearts have beat and are beating with joy, have broken and are breaking with sorrow; one common destiny, the garner of cold eatrh, awaiting all, whilst still onward moves the panorama of human life, childhood, youth, manhood, old age, and the grave. Yet those resplendent orbs on the far-spreading dome above are not burnt out; they remain unchanged in their unfathomable mystery, their solemn grandeur, and in the brilliancy of their beauty.

I had never seen the churchyard of K—— to greater advantage.

There was just enough wind to cause the huge branches of the stately elms to wave to and fro in the bright moonlight, whilst the rustling of their leaves fell softly and sweetly on the ear. All else was still, save the sound produced by the fall of my own footsteps on the gravel path. Except at intervals, when a passing cloud partly obscured the light of the resplendent moon, it was as light as day, and I could with ease decipher the inscriptions on many of the tombstones so thickly scattered around. I was engaged in reading some tolerable lines on one of these mementos of the dead that had recently been erected, and for which purpose I had stepped from the gravel path on to the sward, when I was suddenly startled by hearing very distinctly a deep groan, issuing, as it appeared to me, from the very tomb on which I was gazing. My first impulse was to spring back to the path I had quitted, where I stood almost rooted to the spot, whilst experiencing a peculiar sensation about the region of the heart, as though the current of my blood had there experienced a sudden check. Indeed, I never had been so startled in my life; I was almost paralysed. The hour, the place, combined—it was most unaccountable. After some little hesitation I resumed my walk down the gravel path, purposing to make one round of the churchyard, and then return to the town. Reflecting, however, upon the singularity of the sound that I had heard, I paused, and, somewhat inclined to smile at the fear which I had involuntarily displayed, retraced my steps, more than half convinced that it must have been my fancy which had converted a sudden gust of wind into a groan. Fully disposed to be facetious at my own expense, and in a very philosophical spirit of reasoning upon the absurdity of fear that springeth from superstitious belief in spirits, even though in a churchyard by night, I returned to the spot where I had been so recently startled.

Again I paused before the tomb—again I quitted the footpath and stood amidst the luxuriant grass that grew around it; all was still and silent as death itself. At that moment the gaunt shadow of a huge black cloud hurrying past the moon was thrown upon the tomb and around me, and, ere it had passed away, again a groan broke through the stillness of the night, proceeding from the earth at my feet, and rising on the still air with a fearful distinctness that almost froze my blood. In vain I endeavoured to account for this extraordinary circumstance. In vain I strove to retain my philosophy. The more I struggled to battle with the fear that was fast creeping upon me, the more futile I found it. Every tale of apparitions with which in nursery days I had been frightened—every page I had read of visitations from the other world, the appearance of the shrouded dead, and all the horrors pertaining to the charnel-house, like vivid pictures rose before me, and I must confess that it was with no little trepidation I turned from the spot to hasten from the churchyard, expecting each moment to behold some fearful shape before me.

The wind had risen considerably; black masses of clouds had gathered on the sky, obscuring the moon, and shrouding all things in darkness. As I passed through the iron gate of the churchyard, it swung back, and mingled its harsh discordant notes with the sweep of the strong blast that, rushing through the giant branches of the trees, seemed to my then excited imagination like the voices of angered spirits chasing me from their domain.

Convinced that what I had heard was no delusion, in was my intention, in quitting the churchyard, to prevail upon some person in the town to accompany me back, that my evidence as to the extraordinary fact might be attested. I had not, however, proceeded far, on recovering from the sudden effect produced upon me, mingled also with a somewhat reproachful reflection for the precipitation with which I had left the churchyard, before I came to a halt. Was it possible that I had been deceived? Could my imagination have betrayed me? I stood irresolute whether or not to return. That undefinable something was upon me which is, I apprehend, common to us all, and which, in spite of our reasoning, will at times steal over us, more particularly when alone in the presence of the dead, or in the solemn hours of night amidst the last homes of departed spirits, and when strange voices seem to speak in the wailing blast.

Whilst pausing thus undecided, the rude song of some homeward-bound rustic reveller, borne on the wind, came floating past me from the high-road which winds its way round the lower end of the churchyard. Whether this proximity to something human was the cause or not of suddenly inspiring me with the requisite daring, I will not undertake to say, but I started from my pause of irresolution, and in a few moments had flung open the discordant creaking gate, and stood again on the sward which covered the grave of the buried dead.

At this moment the moon was almost obscured by a cloud, and I approached the spot from which I had so recently and so precipitately retreated, under comparative darkness. I must confess there was something of forced courage in this proceeding, and when I once more came to a stand-still, it was with a wavering sort of inclination to retire, ere I had stood a fair ordeal.

Not long was I left to oppose or indulge that intention, for again a groan, deep and hollow, rose on the stillness of the night. Out of the very stone of the tomb on which I gazed it seemed to issue, and I stood rooted to the spot almost terror-stricken, the blood curdling in my veins, and my heart beating with a vehemence as though it would burst.

There was no longer room to doubt. It was a fearful reality. I became highly excited, scarcely knowing what impelled me to action; perhaps the daring of desperation. I drew nearer to the tomb, and again the hollow groan answered the almost inaudible sound of my footsteps on the grass. I placed my hand upon the cold slab, as though I would prove that it was real, and that I was not labouring under a horrible dream. I could not tear myself from the spot. A fascination of terror, like to that of the snake over the bird, was upon me. Gibbering sprites and ghastly skeleton-forms seemed to glide around me. Strange sounds —words from unseen lips were hissed into my ear, and the wind that rushed boisterously past seemed to bear the hollow laughter of a hundred fearful voices. Large drops of perspiration burst from my forehead, and rolled like tears of terror down my cheeks. I became frenzied with excitement. But mine was the excitement of desperation. I rushed round the tomb, determined to dare all that was to be dared ere quitting the spot. But my hurried footsteps were arrested, and I fell prostrate; and, alas! found myself in close proximity to no "ghost or goblin damned," but, bursting from a cloud, the freed light of the moon revealed to my astonished sight a smockfrocked countryman, who, in a far-gone

state of inebriety, lay half buried in the grass, and over whose helpless carcase I had fallen!

For some moments I could scarcely credit my eyes; but my astonishment soon gave way to a blush at my extreme trepidation. I endeavoured to raise the burly prostrate piece of anatomy, and my efforts were answered by one of those harrowing groans which, had I not returned to the churchyard after my first retreat, and beat the boundaries of the tomb, would have left me, probably, for the remainder of my life, a confirmed believer that all spirits rest not with death and the grave.

With some difficulty I roused the helpless villager from the grass and brought him into a sitting position, resting his head against the side of the tomb, where I left him, and, on my return to the town, apprised the night watchman, whom I met with his assistant, of the case, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the brace of guardian spirits start at once to bring the fellow back to the town, where he would be sure to receive all attention, a night's lodging, and, in due course, an interview with the sage dispensers of the law.

On relating the circumstance to a friend in the town on the following day, in laughing at my adventure he informed me that the churchyard afforded a shorter cut to one of the neighbouring villages than the turnpike-road, and he had no doubt the poor fellow that I had found in such a queer resting-place would prove to belong to the said village, and doubtless, in returning from the fair, in succumbing to the potent spirits within him, had found a soft couch on mother earth in the luxuriant grass of the churchyard. I have related the circumstance exactly as it occurred, and never have I since found aught to cause me to alter my opinion, that ghosts and ghostery would become a dead letter, if all seers and believers would try a thrice ordeal, and always look *behind the tombstone.*

And now to turn to the story which gives its title to this paper.

It was on one cold and boisterous January night that I formed a part of a rather numerous company, who were gathered round a cheerful fire in the once well-known and comfortable hostelrie of the Crown, in the ancient town of St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire. Like Shakspeare's high-minded *Othello*, the house's occupation is now gone. It was tenantless when I last beheld it, and fated, as I was told, like many other Crowns, Mitres, Kings, and Queens besides, to be rased to the ground before that ruthless leveller, the rail.

The Crown had enjoyed the reputation of being a first-rate, as well as the principal hotel in the town. Since its demise, the business has become divided between two of its former rivals—the Lion and the Unicorn; and it may be worth noticing, when they were all three open they were respectively situated, as in our national arms, the Crown in the centre, and the Lion and the Unicorn in the same street on each side. True, the two latter could not be well termed supporters, and in which important feature fails the parallel.

St. Ives is a remarkably built town, and, thanks to the researches of Thomas Carlyle, has of late been rendered doubly interesting, by his publication of Cromwell's letters, with his notes appended, containing much new and interesting information of the great Oliver's life and true character.

St. Ives, where Cromwell was born, is only a few miles from Huntingdon, which place he represented; and at a little distance from the former, on the banks of the river, are the lands which he cultivated when simply an English farmer. To the few who still entertain erroneous opinions as to the true character of this Englishman, of whom it is hardly too much to say,—the greatest our land has produced since the days of Alfred,—and who are not so bigotedly allied to old notions as to refuse to receive in evidence aught that might peril their present opinions, these letters of Oliver Cromwell claim, in justice to the memory of one so maligned, a careful perusal. A principal part of them were written to the members of his family; and the contents bear ample evidence that, unlike Pope's polished epistles, the writer never dreamt of their seeing the light, and are valuable as affording the public an insight into matters behind the scenes of public performances, revealing his private affairs and private actions, and the real incentives and influences by which that great warrior and statesman was actuated in his eventful career.

These letters, dug up as it were from oblivion, hunted, ferreted out by a diligence and perseverance which cannot be too much commended, have been brought to light by one who has studied deeply the actions of Cromwell, and who, uninfluenced by bigoted, if not ignorant, historians, gives a true estimate of a character who, from a deep depth of degradation, had elevated his country to her true position in the eyes of all nations. Carlyle knew that something more than the mere selfish ambition which was for so long—and by some still is—assigned, had been the spur to action with Cromwell. He judged that there must have been a more pure, a more sustaining, a nobler impulse in his heart. He saw that the indomitable spirit, the energy almost superhuman, the fearlessness and determination of action, could alone arise from a sense of right, and of a strong and sincere conviction of being engaged in a just and holy cause. From a perusal of Oliver Cromwell's letters thus brought to light, it seems impossible for any one to rise unconvinced of their genuineness, or to disbelieve that they emanated from the writer's heart. To one and all must they convey the impression that his, indeed, was a "oneness" of purpose, and that the true love of country was with him the mainspring of action. They show also that Cromwell, in his religion, is open to no stronger charge than that of enthusiasm, and that the opprobrious epithet of hypocrite, as far as deserving goes, is now done away with at once and for ever.

Who does not agree with Jeffrey when, in one of his reviews, he says, "Writings not meant for publication, nor prepared for purposes of vanity or contention, are the only memorials in which the true 'form and pressure' of the ages which produce them are ever completely preserved; and, indeed, the only documents from which the great events which are blazoned on their record can ever be satisfactorily explained. It is in such writing alone—*confidential letters*,—private diaries,—family anecdotes,—and personal remonstrances, apologies, or explanations,—that the true springs of action are disclosed, as well as the obstructions and impediments, whether in the scruples of individuals or the general temper of society, by which their operation is so capriciously, and but for these revelations, so unaccountably contracted. They are the true key to the cipher in which public annals are most truly written; and their disclosure, after long intervals of time, is almost as good as the revocation of their

writers from the dead to abide our interrogations, and to act over again, before us, in the very dress and accents of the time, a portion of the scenes which they once guided and adorned."

In these later days, it is gratifying to perceive justice being done to the memory of a great man whom history has so much vilified. That Cromwell has been much misrepresented, has, on all sides of late, been pretty generally admitted. Amongst others, from whom such voluntary admission comes with much force, *Blackwood* some time ago, in one of its customary clever papers on Carlyle's volume, came out nobly in justice to the memory of the great Reformer. Alluding to the collection of Cromwell's correspondence, the northern reviewer observed,

"But, whether dry or not, the letters and speeches of Cromwell should be read by every one desirous of obtaining an insight of the character of not the least extraordinary, *not the least misrepresented person in history*. If there is any one who still believes that Cromwell was a *thorough hypocrite, that his religion was a systematic feint to cover his ambitious designs, the perusal of these volumes will entirely undeceive him.* We look upon this hypothesis, this Machiavelian explanation of Cromwell's character, as henceforth entirely dismissed from all candid and intelligent minds. It was quite natural that such a view should be taken of their terrible enemy by the royalists of the Restoration, hating his memory with a most cordial hatred, and accustomed in their blinding licentiousness to look upon ALL religion as little better than cant and hypocrisy."

So much for the great Cromwell, and now to our story.

I repeat, that it was on a cold night in January, some years ago, that I found myself one of a party assembled round a blazing fire in the commercial-room of the Crown Hotel, at St. Ives. Any one peeping into the interior, from the bitter dark night without, would have been inclined to regard the scene presented as pretty considerably snug. Curling wreaths of creamy smoke rising from the meerschaums and cigars of the social company, the sparkling glasses, the brilliant fire, round which rose the pleasant buzz of voices, must, in combination, have been very suggestive of comfort to an observer. Of this party there was one who took no part in the conversation, and who sat gazing on the fire as though abstracted in thought, or intent only in contemplating the volumes of smoke which he sent eddying upwards from his thin and colourless lips. The individual in question had arrived at a period of life when he could scarcely expect to escape the designation of elderly. There was a constant expression of saddened serenity in his countenance, though more mild than severe, and deep lines of thought on his brow, which, combined with a strange taciturnity, rendered him somewhat remarkable to those who were, like myself, in the habit of meeting him. And yet, with the general unsociability of his manners, he was not by any means unpopular amongst us. When he did break from his habitual silence, there was a deference and kindliness in his manner to those whom he addressed, which, combined with the disposition that, with all his taciturnity, he ever displayed in the little courtesies of the room, caused him to be regarded more as a good-hearted though unhappy fellow, than a misanthrope; and, indeed, he was rather a favourite than otherwise with all who were in the habit of meeting him. My attention was on this night more particularly drawn towards him, by observing the effect

which a circumstance related by one of the party, of a warning which he had received of a relative's death, by the appearance of his figure in the dead of night, produced upon him. Similar stories followed, and, strange to say, others of the company had also had ocular demonstration of such spiritual visitations.

With myself, there were two disbelievers in such appearances, and our arguments for and against became not a little animated as the night wore on. There were some very remarkable circumstances related. Each narrator had been the principal actor in the events he described, for it was agreed that no speaker should be listened to who advanced the experience of others in support of his belief or disbelief in spirit seeing. I must confess that the minority were the sceptical; and, indeed, as we became more deeply engaged in the subject, there appeared to be a general understanding on all sides, that debate should cease whilst such matters were afoot as these strange and all-engrossing self-experiences. As, however, ghost stories, like all other sublunary things, must have an ending, so on this occasion was at length the concluding tale given, last and most remarkable of all, the finale of which was arrived at as the church clock startled the drowsy ear of night with the stroke of twelve.

One by one the company dropped off to bed, and in a short time I found myself the last of the party left with the silent one. His eyes, I observed, were still fixed intently on the fire, although his frontispiece was but fitfully revealed through the eddying clouds of smoke which rose from his meerschaum, and to which at the moment he appeared to be applying himself more vigorously than ever.

The "good night" of the last to bed departed had scarcely died on our ears, when my hitherto silent companion, after knocking the ashes out of the capacious bowl of his pipe, turned on his seat, and in a somewhat excited manner, thus addressed me:

"My intention, in accordance with my usual custom, was to have retired to rest an hour ago, but the conversation in which you have been engaged has had, to me, a peculiar interest, and I have listened with deep attention to the various narrations that have been related to night. You, sir, have avowed yourself a disbeliever in supernatural appearances, and ridiculed the faith that believes in them. Although a silent, I have been an attentive listener to the remarks which fell from your lips on the subject, and perhaps felt double interest therein, as the opinions which you entertain on the matter are in direct unison with those I once held myself, and the facts and illustrations you advanced are such, not a little strange to say, as I was myself wont to bring forth whenever I felt called upon to oppose that which I once considered to be the offspring alone of weak and failing minds, or strong, ignorant, and unhealthy imaginations. I perceive," he continued, whilst glancing at my empty tumbler, "as Goldsmith hath it, 'the tankard is no more.' Come, let us have our glasses replenished, a fresh supply of coal to the fire, and if you are not too tired, I will in confidence communicate to you some circumstances which occurred to myself, pertinent to the subject of this night's conversation, and which will, I think, cause you to be less confident in your present firm disbelief in visitations from the dead."

Remarkable as was my companion for his extreme taciturnity, this overture not a little surprised me, and in agreeing to tarry and listen to his narrative, my curiosity was somewhat excited, nor was I disappointed

in my anticipations that I should hear something out of the common, and which would account for that reserve and gloom which so strikingly characterised the man.

Our glasses replenished, one of our host's best havannas for myself, another charge in the bowl of my companion's meerschaum, an additional supply of coal, and a poke of the fire from the scientific hands of the waiter—whom we dismissed for the night, with orders for the boots to sit up in the kitchen, in companionship with a jug of October, until we retired—and with a few preliminary remarks the eccentric began his strange story.

I am now five-and-thirty years of age. Five years ago, I had unexpectedly occasion, during one of my periodical visits to Pembrokeshire, to return from that county immediately to head-quarters in town, each moment's delay being of consequence. With the view of saving considerable time, I departed from my usual route, and took the shortest cuts across the country, with many parts of which I was almost a stranger. I was driving at that time a fine sixteen-hands roan, that could do his thirty miles a day, nor show the worse if daily averaging that distance in a journey; he was not indulged with more than one sabbath in a fortnight.

At the period I speak of, I was a very different man to what you now behold me. The vigour of my step was unimpaired, there was strength in my arm, and courage in my heart. Cold, sunshine, or storm—morn, noon, night, were all alike to me. He was a bold fellow who would then heedlessly provoke me; a bolder, who would feel no hesitation in quarrel to measure his strength with mine. Within my own recollection, I had never known an hour's illness, and at the period I speak of, I was in the full vigour of mature and unimpaired manhood. This I mention, to show that your argument, of old people and invalids being the only spirit seers, will not, in my case, apply, and that you may bear in mind, as I proceed, the health I was enjoying when the circumstances which I am about to relate took place. To return. In a certain part of Carmarthenshire, which it is not necessary to mention, my horse, which had never before even made a stumble during seven years' driving, came down with me like a shot. I was pitched, sir, out of my vehicle, to find, on regaining my legs, both shafts broken—one of them as though, like a stick, it had been snapped across the knee; the other smashed almost to parting. The knees of my horse were severely cut, and, as I raised him, and looked at the blood streaming down his fetlocks, the conviction dawned upon me that the noble brute had at last been overdriven. Up to the time of my starting on my return home he had been doing constant work; and since the commencement of what I may call my forced marches, he had accomplished near an average of five-and-thirty miles a day. Thirteen miles more I proposed proceeding ere pitching my tent for the night, when he came down. Sir, it was cruelty—I felt it to be so—I confess it, and I am not ashamed to say, that I cried over the noble brute like a child. The day was considerably advanced, and, from the spot where my mishap occurred, I knew myself to be at least four miles from any habitable place where I could hope to obtain accommodation of any kind. It was a wild part of the Carmarthenshire hills, where you might travel miles without seeing a human face, or a human dwelling. Fortunately, however, within the sound of my voice, on the slope of the mountain, stood a rude hut,

from which, in answer to my calls, emerged two men and a lad. They could not speak nor understand English, nor could I speak Welsh; I had, therefore, recourse to the most expressive pantomimic action which I could command, and their comprehension, which at first seemed remarkably dull, was wonderfully quickened by the display of a handful of coin, which, intimating as it did that they were to be paid, proved to be an excellent interpreter of my wants. After some little delay, a rope was brought from the hut, with which we managed to join the broken shaft, and bind the shattered one, so as to be sufficiently strong to bear the draught of the gig without my own weight. In this precarious state, leading my horse, I started to walk the four miles which lay between me and the village of S—— (if village it might be called), a collection of some few rude dwellings, irregularly built, and which you might pass through twenty times in a year and not see one of the natives who there vegetate. The place is, however, picturesquely situated, and has some share of celebrity for the fishing which its neighbouring streams afford. This small gathering place of humanity was on my road, and nine miles beyond it is situated the town to which I was proceeding, and where I proposed dining and stopping for the night. You may suppose, sir, taking into consideration the delay occasioned by my accident, by the time I had accomplished the four miles the day was considerably advanced, and that horse and rider stood somewhat in need of refreshment.

Most cheerless was the appearance of the only village inn, and the reflection that I should be compelled there to take up my quarters for the night, as you may imagine, was anything but agreeable. Darkness was just gathering round, as my summons at the inn door, which I found closed and fastened, and all about the place in solemn stillness, was answered by a woman, who seemed to contemplate me and my shattered equipage with not a little astonishment. This was the hostess, who, replying to my inquiries, informed me that I could have a bed, and that their stabling was excellent. Ere seeking, however, the interior of the cheerless-looking inn, I proceeded to assist the ostler, as the landlady designated a short, bow-legged, wild-looking sort of mountaineer, who continued touching the battered old hat which he wore with an excess of obsequiousness, accompanying each movement with an "Iss, sir," whilst following the directions which I gave him about my nag.

After seeing the knees of my faithful four-footed companion well bathed, a feed before, and a good bed beneath him, I prepared to look after my own creature comforts.

On issuing from the stable, I found the night had set in; a few stars were just perceptible amidst dark masses of clouds, which were swiftly sweeping over the heavens, whilst the distant horizon was flushed with a fringe of pale light that told of the rising moon. Strong and cutting was the night wind that had suddenly risen, howling around the inn, and shaking its pendent sign, which seemed with discordant creaks to reply to its ravings. Uninviting as was the appearance of the building, it was with a feeling of considerable satisfaction that I crossed its threshold from the gloomy night and the biting of the blast.

Whilst I had been engaged in the stable, the hostess had been busy preparing for my comfort; and the appearance of a snug room, enlivened by a cheerful, blazing fire, a couple of candles, and a table laid for dinner, was

particularly refreshing. A tolerable steak, a bottle of stout, followed by a glass of brandy and water, in the snug quarters where I found myself so unexpectedly placed, tended to make me experience a more tranquil frame of mind, and I drew closer up to the fire, after discussing my dinner, much disposed to regard my mishap and its consequences as, after all, not so very bad. I need scarcely tell you, sir, that to obtain a comfortable bed was the next consideration; and in expressing a wish to see the domicile intended for me, you may suppose that in such a place I did not fail very emphatically to state, that well-aired sheets was a desideratum of the greatest consequence.

The somewhat slovenly girl who waited upon me retired to consult with her mistress about the room which I was to occupy, and I meantime took up an old country newspaper which was lying in the room. You will probably remember, about the period I speak of, the occurrence of a dreadful murder at an inn in the West of England. Well, sir, the very paper I had taken up, at this unexpected place of sojourn for the night, conveyed to me the first intelligence of that very fearful business. Knowing the town as I did, the house in which it occurred, the situation of the bedrooms, in one of which the murder was committed, and where I had often slept, rendered it to me a painfully interesting narrative; and you will judge how much I had become absorbed in the account, when I tell you that I was unconscious of the presence of my hostess, who, with a candle in her hand, had entered the room unseen, unheard by me, and I only became aware of her presence when the sound of her voice behind me, announcing that she was waiting to show me my bedchamber, caused me to start from my chair with a suddenness as though I had experienced the shock of a battery.

Somewhat ashamed at such a display of nervousness, I alluded to the subject on which I had been so deeply engrossed, by way of accounting for what otherwise might appear to be timidity. My hostess made no reply, but with her thin, shrivelled features, which I now first observed bore a somewhat gloomy expression, led the way, whilst I fancied I heard a sigh escape from her thin and rigid-looking lips. There was no choice of rooms. The one into which I was ushered was on the ground-floor, looking into a garden; it was small, but apparently clean; the bed and furniture, however, had a worn and sombre appearance, which, with the low ceiling, produced rather an oppressive effect. Beyond this I did not at the time take further observation, and desiring that my portmanteau might be therein conveyed, I returned to my sitting-room, purposing to have one meerschaum of canaster, and then seek my pillow.

Soon after I had commenced this part of my evening's customary solace, I was not a little surprised by the entrance of a visitor, as unexpected as, I may say, unwelcome—and that was the landlord of the house. He somewhat ungraciously apologised for intruding, but he wished to tell me that the ostler and himself would so repair the broken shafts of my gig as to enable me to drive to S —— in the morning. He had also been examining my horse; and he thought that I should like to know what he thought of his injured knees. In his opinion they were not very badly cut, and that, he had no doubt, the animal would soon be fit for work again. I saw at once, or thought I saw, in this a plausible pretext to thrust his society upon me, possibly with a view of assisting me to add to my bill, as well as a spice of curiosity, to learn something about me. Indifferent, how-

ever, as to what was his object, in return for the information he had brought me, I invited him to take a seat and a glass of what he liked best. As he drew a chair up to the fire, in compliance with my invitation, I saw that my host was not in appearance one of the favoured division of the human family. There were deep lines on his beetling brow, a sourness of expression in his dark visage, and a general repulsiveness about him, that caused me to regard him with feelings the very opposite to those of prepossession. Ere he had been long in the room, I noticed also a something in his manner as though he were not at ease; and I occasionally perceived that, although he appeared studiously to avoid meeting the full gaze of my eye, he cast furtive glances at me from under his bushy eyebrows, whenever he thought he could do so unobserved. I have already said that I did not like his looks; nay, after he had sat a short time in the room, and as I listened to the harsh, grating tones of his voice, I began to experience positive uneasiness. You have, no doubt, sir, read in your time of many dire tragedies, performed in all their dread realities, at roadside inns. You may probably remember that graphic description of a traveller who, being unexpectedly compelled to sojourn for a night at one of these places, found, on retiring to rest, in his bedroom a dog that had once belonged to him, and which, on his calling at the house, had recognised him, and had sought and waited in his bedroom ere revealing himself to his old master. You will, perhaps, remember how it is told of the faithful and sagacious brute indicating distress whenever his former owner approached the bed on which he purposed sleeping. The suspicion of the traveller being thereby awakened, he determined on sitting in a chair by the fire, instead of committing himself to the bed, so much the object of the dog's aversion;—a flash of light in the dead of night revealing itself through the boards around the bed, and its immediate disappearance through the floor, apprising him of his narrow escape from the villains who, in the room beneath, awaited the descent of their intended victim. You will, probably, remember the story. True or otherwise, I know not; but it was vividly recalled to my recollection, with all its minutiæ of detail, as I sat confronting my forbidding-looking host; and as it flashed across my mind, I could not but reflect that for such a deed the man who sat before me appeared eminently fitted.

I had in my possession at the time a considerable sum of money, and, I assure you, the very appearance of my landlord caused me to begin to be apprehensive for its safety. In a short time my host had despatched his liquor, and finding, by my not inviting him to repeat it, that I was not desirous of his prolonging his stay, he rose from his seat, and wishing me good night, withdrew.

I was considerably relieved by his departure; and soon after, feeling very weary, I sought my bedroom. The particulars of the murder that I had been reading, combined with the unfavourable impression which the villanous countenance of the landlord had produced, induced me to turn with no little interest to observe what were the fastenings of my bedroom door. Imagine my dismay, when I found there were none. There was no key in the lock; and the asp, through long disuse, had become rusted, and immovable as the hills. Determined, however, not to leave the entrance to my room in so unguarded a state, I drew the

dressing-table from its place, and fixing it against the door, piled thereon a couple of chairs, and so arranged them that an attempt to enter would inevitably cause their fall, and produce such a noise as I knew, if sleeping, would awaken me. Having made these arrangements, I next turned my attention to a shelf, suspended in a corner of the room, and on which I observed some books. For some years prior to that time I had been but little of a reader. My mode of life, in which there is so little of retirement and so much of excitement, as you have doubtless experienced, is calculated in a great degree to banish attachment for books. He, whose home is an inn, who almost daily changes his place of sojourn, to whom the cessations or intervals in the hurly-burly of his every-day life are but rare, will invariably find books, his old companions, lose their charms, solitude becomes oppressive, and the clatter and hubbub of the crowd necessary to his existence. Wearied, however, as I then found myself, I retained sufficient of my old attachment to letters to induce me to take down two or three volumes from the dusty shelf, and drawing a chair up to the table at the barricaded door, commenced a survey of their contents. One of them I was surprised to find a philosophic work of some celebrity. In it I noticed several notes, written in pencil, some of which had become so faint that I could not decipher them, whilst others were legible; and I was much struck with the acumen and original thinking which they displayed. At the end of another volume, on a blank leaf, I also observed, written in the same hand, a copy of verses, evidently, from the corrections and interlinings, original, and left just as thrown off. They were of a plaintive character, very beautiful, and bore evidence of having emanated from a polished mind, and a gentle and wounded spirit. So much was I struck with their beauty that I committed them to memory. I have since forgotten all but their purport, which was to the effect that the recluse writer had sought, amidst the wilds of nature, a retreat from the noisy world of which he was weary. A temporary fit of misanthropy I concluded, and resolving to inquire next morning of my host as to the former occupant of the room, I closed the volume, and retired to bed considerably fatigued, whilst my shoulder indicated too unmistakably that a visit to some surgeon on the morrow would be indispensable. Before the window of my room drooped some heavy, dingy-looking curtains; and as it was bright moonlight, ere seeking my pillow I had drawn them apart as far as possible, thereby causing the room to become almost as light as day. Not to be too tedious, I will simply tell you that, fagged as I was, I could not sleep. In vain I tossed from side to side, and resorted to all the expedients I had ever heard suggested as inducive of a visit from Nature's soft nurse. Right side—left side—I turned, and turned in vain. I sat bolt upright in bed and stared at the heavy curtains, and at the white moonlight on the walls, hoping that my eyes would in very weakness and weariness cry enough, and close in sleep. All was however useless, and after I had again in vain endeavoured to rest my head on the pillow, and calmly await the approach of slumber, I sprang from the bed and paced about the room, as you may suppose, in anything but a tranquil mood.

After some quarter of an hour's perambulation, which I varied by occasionally looking through the window into the moonlit garden, I once more turned into bed, to find, alas! sleep as distant from my eyes as

ever. It was certainly remarkable. Had I been indulging in copious draughts of strong tea ere retiring to rest it would not have surprised me; but such was not the case. More strange, too, this sensation of weariness, yet inability to fall asleep, was quite new to me; for I had ever previously been accustomed to doze immediately after laying my head on my pillow. At this distance of time, I cannot say how frequently I left my bed that night to pace about the room. I positively dressed myself again, and endeavoured to win on a chair the sweet state of oblivion which was denied me in bed. I sat in the centre of the room until I began to feel chilly, but sleeping seemed out of the question. I remember distinctly consulting my watch after the last walk I had taken to and fro in the chamber, when I found it was close upon one o'clock, and that near three hours had passed away since I had entered the room. Well, sir, the last time of my turning again into bed, finding that to sleep was utterly hopeless, I lay gazing once more on the moonlit blank walls of the room, sighing most anxiously for the break of day. Listen, sir. Whilst thus occupied, at the foot of my bed, very clearly defined, there suddenly appeared the figure of a man looking towards me. Conceive my astonishment. I knew not what to make of it. I was positive that not a soul had entered the room. I rubbed my eyes to convince myself that I was not dreaming. I was certainly as much awake as I am this moment. The figure was there still. I turned to look at the windows, the curtains, the chairs which I had placed on the table against the door; they were unmoved, exactly as I had left them, and I was not dreaming. It was all fearfully real. I even noticed the chair on which I had been sitting, which I had taken from its original place and left in the middle of the room. Yes, all was as clear and palpable as the figure itself. I was not afraid. I was at that moment as self-possessed as I ever was in my life. Spiritual appearances I had never believed in; nay, like yourself, had ever ridiculed the faith that gave them existence. The event is as fresh and vivid to me as though not an hour, not a minute, had elapsed since its occurrence. I cannot banish it from my memory. It haunts me everywhere. Sir, it was no delusion. I sprang from my bed that night cool and collected, with no stronger feeling excited than that of wonder. I acted from no sudden impulse. Ere seeking a closer inspection of the object, I paused to reflect that it was impossible for any human soul to have entered the room without my knowledge, and that I had also taken the precaution to look under the bed. I felt satisfied that I was alone; and sprang out of bed, with the impression that I should discover some reflected object, or interruption of the moon's rays, had produced the semblance of a human figure, and which I did not doubt, on my near approach, would vanish into thin air. Judge my horror when, on nearing the object, my steps were arrested by the gaze of a pair of eyes, whose expression almost froze my blood, rooting me to the spot, motionless with terror. Sir, I was not, could not be mistaken. The eyes did not move, but, with a stony gaze, were fixed on mine, whilst the countenance was most fearful in its ghostly pallor. Never whilst I live shall I forget that look, like which I had seen nothing on earth before. Were I an artist, I could at this distance of time give the features to canvas, so fearfully vivid are they impressed upon my memory.

You now behold me, sir, perhaps somewhat excited. You are at this moment, in all probability, conjecturing what natural defect in the organisation of my brain, or accidental injury thereto, produced what you may conclude to have been so much weakness. Weakness it was not; imagination it was not; but a dread reality. It was impossible for me afterwards to remember what length of time this unearthly visitant remained, or how long I stood in mute terror on the same spot after it had disappeared. I know not how I returned to my bed after the figure had vanished; but I know I did not sleep. At one time I was strongly disposed to knock up the people of the house, and resume my quarters below until daylight. But to disturb them, except in a case of extremity, I considered would not be right, and I therefore dressed myself and paced the room, in vain endeavouring to banish from my mind the fearful form that I had looked upon. The bright beams of the morning at length streamed into the chamber, and the early song of a robin from the garden before my window, came with its gushing melody like an angelic strain, bearing a sweet and soothing balm to my overwrought feelings. With the daylight I again went through a close examination of the rooms. The chairs and tables which I had placed against the door were undisturbed, the windows still fastened. I looked again under the bed; it was evident, however, as I had previously felt fully satisfied, that the room contained not a living soul but myself. Sir, I quitted that room with a horrible suspicion in my mind. I sat down to breakfast; but scarcely touched it. One subject alone occupied my thoughts. I sent for my host, and told him what I had seen; describing the appearance and position of the figure. I stopped in the midst of my communication, for the cheeks of the landlord became blanched, whilst the involuntary action of the muscles of his mouth revealed how much my narrative affected him. Sir, I felt satisfied that I had seen the spirit of a murdered man, and that I was standing in the presence of his murderer. With a husky voice and an embarrassment of manner, which the villain must have known was evident to me, and which probably increased it, he replied by some not very coherent remarks, from which all I could gather was his surprise, and that he would speak to his wife about it. He shuffled out of the room, leaving me with an impression that he was marked for the gallows, and that I had been, by some inscrutable means, destined to bring him to justice. But how to prove it?—how to bring home the crime to the perpetrator? The landlord sent his wife to me. She was perfectly collected, though the expression of her eye struck me as indicating alarm. Appearing astonished to hear that I had been disturbed in the night, she affected to believe I must have been dreaming. And in answer to my questions, relative to the former occupant of the room, whose books I had found there, she stated that he was a gentleman who some years ago regularly visited them in the fishing season. Her coolness somewhat staggered me. She replied to all my inquiries relative to their former guest. And yet her answers to my interrogations were not altogether satisfactory.

There was at times hesitation in her replies which I did not altogether like, but this might have been only my fancy; and our conversation on the subject terminated without my having derived anything to justify me longer in believing that the crime of murder had been committed in the

inn. And yet withal, recalling the fearful vision I had seen, for the life of me I could not divest myself of the suspicion that such had at some time or other been there perpetrated. This, as you will admit, sir, would not have warranted me in pursuing my inquiries further, and I, therefore, soon after breakfast, took my leave of the place, and in my roughly-repaired gig drove to the town to which I was proceeding when my mishap occurred, and which is situate some nine or ten miles from the scene of the circumstances which I have been relating. It was only on the day following the accident that it transpired I had in the fall from my gig received an internal injury, which, with the excitement I had gone through, brought on my first illness. It was a severe one, and I was confined to my bedroom for a month afterwards. From that illness, sir, I shall never thoroughly recover. Nervousness, lowness of spirits, have been mine ever since; and the apparition, first seen in the chamber of the village inn, haunts me still. Everywhere, by night, sleeping or waking, it flits before me. I cannot banish it away. It is very dreadful.

Large drops of perspiration rolled down the forehead of the speaker, and with the last sentence he buried his face in his hands, and paused in his narrative.

After a few moments' silence, which I was too much lost in mingled pity and astonishment to break, he thus continued:

My story, sir, comes to a conclusion. Harassed by the continued visitations of that fearful figure, and with the impression that it came to reproach me for not making further investigations, in accordance with my suspicions of the people of the inn, about a twelvemonth after I had become convalescent, with a friend, to whom I had communicated all the particulars, I again visited the place. The village inn we found as I had left it; but the man and his wife who then occupied it, on inquiries elicited, had emigrated nearly a year ago to America. Judge, sir, for yourself whether the revelation of my suspicions, my account of what I had seen, and my inquiries relative to their former guest, had in any degree influenced their quitting the country. That murder most foul had at some period been committed in that bedroom, I have but little doubt, and, as murder will out, I live in the hope each day that through the inscrutable means which are often employed, the deed will yet be brought to light. Until then, sir, I shall know no tranquillity; haunted as I am by the figure of what I cannot but believe to be the spirit of the murdered man, flitting as it doth everlastingly before me, as though in reproach for not having at the time taken steps to bring the crime home to the perpetrators. And yet, what could I have done? What grounds had I to proceed upon? Who would have credited that the figure I had seen, and that has ever since haunted me, was aught but the creation of a brain diseased?—the offspring of my imagination?

The chimes of the church were sounding the quarters four, for the hour, as the speaker brought his story to an end, and scarce had the last words died on his lips ere the solemn stroke of one on the bell broke the stillness with startling distinctness.

We remained for some moments silent. Absorbed in the story, we had left the candles unsnuffed, the fire had sunk low in the grate, and the gloomy appearance of the now shadowy room, in unison with the melancholy expression of my companion's countenance, was calculated to increase the effect produced by his remarkable narrative; and so far from offering any remark upon what I had heard, I sat in silent wonderment looking at him, bewildered and astonished. Was he labouring under some strange hallucination? Was all that I had been listening to but the offspring of some vivid dream? A dream it could not be; there were circumstances connected with his narrative which showed such supposition to be ungrounded. There was, indeed, an appearance of fearful reality about it. I was about to interrogate him further on the subject, when he rose from his seat to bid me good night.

"I drive before breakfast to Cambridge," he said, "and therefore to-morrow shall not see you; probably we may not meet again for some time. I do not wish the account I have given you to-night to be repeated to others; but to one person, beside yourself, have I ever related the circumstance; nor should I have been induced to communicate it to you, had it not been to show you, that the ridicule which you cast upon the faith which believes in spiritual visitations, is unjust. Having done so, I have only to request that you will never again mention the circumstance as connected with me, for I assure you that I suffer enough without having to endure the inquiries of an unfeeling curiosity which would, in such case, beset me."

"You may rely upon me," I replied, whilst returning the cordial grasp of his hand. "That which I have heard from you this night will, at all events, cause me to be more guarded for the future in my remarks upon such matters, and if I cannot begin to believe, will cease to ridicule. Good night."

I soon after retired to my bed, and for long I lay cogitating on, and recalling the incidents of the strange narrative I had been listening to, and the cock had thrice done salutation to the morn ere I fell asleep, dreaming a strange medley, in which ghosts, goblins, and my late companion, conspicuously figured.

Having given the story as it was related to me, I must leave the reader to form his own conclusions. Whether or not the spirit seer had been deceived by a dream, I will not attempt to decide. All that I can add is, that although desirous of again seeing the narrator, to have further conversation on the subject with him, we have never since met. He is, I believe, however, still on the "road," and, I have no doubt, he smiles with something akin to scorn whenever he listens to one, as he listened to me, speaking irreverently and contemptuously of all believers in visits from the spirit world.

CHRISTMAS.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

Fill the bright goblet, spread the festive board;
Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair!
Through the loud hall, in joyous concert pour'd,
Let mirth and music sound the dirge of care!
But ask thou not if happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;
Lift not the festal mask!—enough to know
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

SCOTT'S "*Lord of the Isles.*"

"AUNT, dear aunt, it only wants a few days to Christmas; I am so glad! Do, pray, pray let us have a merry one. It is my FIRST in England, remember; and mamma told me, before I left India, how delightful you used to make them."

"Did she? Did your mamma actually allude to our FORMER happy Christmases?"

"Oh! many, many times, and with such regret, that she cried bitterly when speaking of them; and more particularly, when describing your amiable assiduity, your indefatigable exertions on those occasions—she sobbed like a child then, aunt, she did indeed."

"Was your father present then?"

"Oh, no! and if he ever happened to enter the room, she would change the subject instantly, and smile, as if she had not been so sorrowful just previously. I suppose she did not wish him to know she regretted her dear home, as he was obliged to reside abroad. Poor mamma! she often cried; generally about Christmas time the most, however; so do, there is a sweet, kind aunt, let me see what there really is in YOUR Christmases, to cause my far-away mother to deplore the loss of them so sadly."

What a train of melancholy reflections did this simple request awaken in my mind! How rapidly did memory review the past! How boldly, in the brilliant foreground of the present, stood forth the images, long buried beneath the ruins of oblivion! How again, for the moment, I became light-hearted and hopeful; how again, loving and trustful! How frequently had I anticipated Christmas with equal sanguine enthusiasm—how frequently had I entreated that it might be a merry one—how frequently had I found it so! But now, but now, for the woful difference! Still, as I gazed with inexpressible emotion on the upraised and beaming face of my young niece, radiant in the glowing light of a newly-stirred fire, and eloquent in the strongly appealing expectation it is so barbarous to disappoint, I determined that my own secret and vainly-fostered sorrow should not mar her pleasure; I resolved that she should find the approaching season as joyous as she anticipated, if in MY power to render it so.

Her time will assuredly arrive too, I thought, when that now bounding heart will be down-weighed by the anguish of the remembrance, that for her joy hath departed from the earth; for to each is a due portion of suffering most righteously meted out by that unerring Hand which steadily balances the scales of human destiny, to make us wise unto salvation by affliction! Yet, yet, compel her not to grieve on the spring-dawn of existence; check not her spirit's flight into the cloudless skies of girlhood's brief horizon; its buoyant wings will all too soon be beaten and battered by the tempest-blast of the winter-storm of womanhood, and be folded over a bosom tried to the uttermost, but still, O God! purified by trial!

What, however, to that giddy child of thirteen would be the startling pictures I could draw of that desolation which doth truly desolate? How could she be convinced, in her glorious hopefulness, of the despair which maketh this world a charnel-house indeed? How could she, with her heart brimful of gladness, be made to feel, or even comprehend, the vast void—the immense emptiness, which time, treachery, and death have created in mine—the hollow grave-pits, over which not even the sands of the desert sweep, to level them for the next simoon of agony to lay waste? How could she school that laughing eye, familiar only with the beauty and brightness of the present, to behold, as in a vision, a vision of the grim future, the pale and sheeted of the tomb, occupying, like the ghosts of multiplied Banquos, the vacant places at the festive-board, on the Christmas-day they were wont to hail with a solemn delight, at those annual family gatherings, which enfold in the uniting embrace of fraternal love the wide-scattered and the missed?

How could she bring her thoughts, wandering in the pursuit of happiness, to pause in their mid-career, to meditate on that period when they will only ponder on, only long for the Divine invitation, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest?" How could she consider it aught save the most egregious exaggeration, to be assured that the heart now so odorous, so adorned with the blooming and fragrant flowers of hope, will ere long be only perfumed, only embellished by the rank and verdant luxuriance of the sepulchre? No, no, no! far from me be the cruel design to blight the buds of promise ere they blow! Far from me be the unkind attempt to allow the chill of my heart to fall cold upon hers, to nip its expanding flowers in the ratheness of their bloom! She shall have a merry Christmas; such a Christmas as is meet for youth and innocence, assisted by all its lovely emblems of joyous dance, lively song, and mistletoe-bush; and once more I will endeavour to smile with them that smile—nay, I WILL smile, for shall I not have reason, broken in spirit although I am, in being permitted by a benign Providence still to minister to the felicity of others; still in having their confidence, that I CAN render them happy, it being but the most culpable indulgence of selfishness after all to allow regret for the dead to make us indifferent to the pleasures of the living; or suffer the active duties yet incumbent on us so long as we remain below, to yield to the passive anguish for those it has pleased the Almighty to remove above, it seeming, by so doing, "to sorrow without hope for those who sleep?"

Far be from me the ungenerous idea of seizing on the peculiar, the hallowed season of universal Christian festivity, to grieve the more visibly and intensely in the presence of the young and inexperienced, rendering them sorrowful from sympathy, and not from suffering; for, to the aged and reflective, no particular period need be set apart for mourning, each day being but the anniversary of some funereal woe, some death-severings, some heart-offerings to God, of earth's most priceless treasures—He demanding and exacting the morning and evening sacrifice of the very firstlings of the flock of our most cherished affections—the precious kindred—the hoarded hopes—the garnered love—the cultivated talents—the years we would fain retain, yet which "perish as a tale that is told."

In the soft breath of spring—the balmy zephyr of summer—in the plaintive sigh of autumn—and in the hyperborean blast of winter, mingles the iterated cadence of the requiem-hymn of some inurned felicity—some departed hope—some buried illusion, trusted in to the last as a

sacred reality. Yet, yet, in mercy is our heart so robbed, our soul so stripped, to wean us from a scene which we could not otherwise quit without a more than mortal pang.

How ready am I "to go hence and be no more seen!" How do I long to lay down the burden of life, and rest from my labours! How do I thirst for the living waters to quench the fever of disappointment, and allay the ragings of despair! How do I long—yet, nevertheless, "Thy will and not mine be done, O Lord!" Thou hast afflicted, but still sustained; thou hast bowed, but not broken the poor fragile reed, swayed to and fro by the winds of Thy wrath; for Thou didst temper that wind to my feebleness, and lifted my head above the tempest; making me feel its power, that I might learn to "remember my Creator in the days of my youth." And how necessary was the lesson, alas! How arrogant I was in my glorious happiness! How did I forget, that where "much is given, MUCH also is required!" How did I live only for myself, my love, my hopes, and how were they all taken from me, leaving me solitary as a childless widow in my desolation!

Nothing could be happier than my early home; nothing brighter than the opening of my existence; nothing more full of promise than the noon of my womanhood. Blest with kind and gentle parents, who could AFFORD time to be affectionate, from the ease and affluence of their circumstances; I, and an only sister, grew up together without one thought, one care, one difference of feeling or opinion, until we reached the respective ages of seventeen and eighteen—Jessie being only one year younger than myself—when, as was natural, we formed attachments, which rather diverted our attention from each other, yet without creating either rivalry or jealousy; and, for once, "the course of true love" did, indeed, appear to "run smooth;" the objects which inspired our affections seemed so every way worthy of them, that not one human being suggested a single objection, imagined a shadow of opposition; all, on the contrary, were enraptured with the prospect of our certain happiness.

Jessie's intended was the clergyman of our native village; a young man of profound learning, and profounder humility; handsome, amiable, and warm-hearted to the last degree. Mine was in the army, but apparently equally as amiable, and I knew him to be as handsome and devoted to me as Charles Leslie was to my sister.

After a year, that glided away as a day, so sweetly tranquil was its unruffled current, it was fixed that we should both be married on the week following the Christmas we were preparing to celebrate with our accustomed joyfulness. The relatives, near and remote, of the two bridegrooms arrived in due time; our wedding-dresses, and my travelling ones, came from London, as I and my husband were to leave for India soon after the important event, while Jessie was only to remove to the parsonage. All was bustle, flutter, congratulation, and bashful and anxious delight throughout the whole household. My mother thought of my departure, and then she would kiss me and weep; and then she remembered that her younger darling would abide by her still, and then she would kiss her and smile; kiss her more fervently, smile more radiantly, for the gloom that my going cast over her spirit. On the Christmas morning—the LAST I, at least, was to spend at home, in England, perhaps, for years to come—Mr. Leslie walked over from the parsonage, as was agreed on the overnight, to escort Jessie to church; Mr. Graham, my lover, staying in the house with us, my mother wishing that all so dear to her should assemble together around the sacramental table on that day.

Breakfast had long been announced, but still we did not care to commence it, for Jessie had not yet left her room. Twice my mother rose up to go and see what detained her, and yet, without knowing why, sank again into her chair, with a pallid cheek and fainting heart; then I essayed to move, but my limbs trembled so, I could not stir from the table, beneath which my knees were knocking together convulsively. What was this mysterious, this intuitive instinct of dread, which pervaded the heart an instant before so totally ignorant of fear? What was it which sealed every lip in silent consternation—tied the tongue so voluble a moment previously, in the trifling details which so interest the unincumbered mind? Could it be because a spoiled and petted girl had overslept herself? No, no; oh! no, it was not Jessie's absence alone which occasioned this painful confusion; Mr. Graham was also missing from the circle. Suspense becoming intolerable to my mother, and awakening a fretful impatience in my father, I volunteered to go in quest of the fugitives, that is, to get away from all those eyes, reading as it were my too terrible suspicions. I reached Jessie's room, as I thought alone; I paused at the door, not to listen, my own heart's beat preventing that, but to gain a moment's respite to nerve myself for the trial—to steel my soul for the truth.

"Open the door; for the love of mercy, Alice, open the door; she must be ill," exclaimed Charles Leslie, who had, with the whole group, followed me up-stairs. I DID,—and was scarcely surprised to find it perfectly untenanted as we hurried into the room.

"Hush! she sleeps," said the deluded Charles, seeing the window-blinds yet drawn down. "Sweet be thy morning dreams my innocent love! Let us go away. Softly! angels are watching over her now!"

"She sleeps not—has not slept this night; see, the bed has never been disturbed, the pillow pressed by her cheek."

"O my God! my God! what CAN it mean?" cried the distracted young man.

"What can it mean, indeed? Why, that she is gone, and Graham is her companion, Leslie!"

"Gone! Gone where? Gone for what?"

"For disgrace, perhaps; or, at all events, for repentance."

"Oh! oh! oh!"

This was no idle surmise, no rash conjecture. Jessie was gone—gone without making a sign—gone, without one word of farewell—one word of remorse. Not a vestige remained to tell of the recent presence of the lovely and the lost; all, all was heartlessly carried away by her; all, all save only the half-faded bouquet she had worn on the preceding evening, which, lying crushed and trampled on at the foot of the dressing-table, caught the eye of Charles, who snatched it up with the desperate eagerness of one who has found "hid treasure," and resolved to retain his prize; for he thrust it far, far into his bosom, and placed his hand over it with a solemn and affecting care.

My mother stood stunned, and looking on abstractedly, like one not particularly interested in the tragic scene. My father, who had returned from Graham's room, bowed his head in sorrowful shame; for he had found it also VACANT. And I, and I, the most oppressed, the most injured, sought, however, to arouse that dreaming mother, sought to comfort and encourage that abashed father, sought to console that outraged and stricken lover; but they were insensible to this great effort of self-abnegation—ungrateful for this almost divine attempt to speak peace to others with a

heart so wofully at war with itself. My mother could not even comprehend why I so compassionated her. My father was indignant that I should DARE to suppose that there was comfort for him under such disgrace; and Charles repelled my advances by waving me off with a gesture of the most agonising despair; but instantly after, as if recollecting that he was not the ONLY sufferer, he said gently and falteringly,

"Not yet, dear Alice, not YET; I am too much overpowered to bear even your sympathy; the blow was so unexpected, it has quite prostrated me; but there is One to comfort us both still. He, who has ever been 'a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.' For are we not poor? are we not needy? has not the blast of the terrible ones been unto us, indeed, as furious as against the wall, my poor fellow-sufferer? Who would, who COULD have believed this blast would have been blown to our destruction by thy sister Jessie?"

Who indeed? Surrounded by fond and watchful eyes, not one suspicion had been awakened by look or action; so guarded, so wary was that young girl to outwit the vigilance of age, the circumspection of experience, the reliance of all. I could rather have suspected myself—doubted of my own integrity, my own truth—than charged her with the shadow of deception. I should have thought it a crime, almost a profanation, to have associated her and dissimulation for one instant together. Oh! for my trustfulness! oh! for the fatal consequences of that blind trustfulness! oh! for its direr effects on my unprepared heart! "No little cloud arose out of the sea, which was to overwhelm me, like a man's hand, to bid me hasten down that the rain stop me not,"—the tempest had come "as a thief in the night," sudden and silent as the muffled bullet launched from an air-gun, which is felt but not heard, as it strikes the aimed-at victim to the earth.

The church-bells chimed for service, but there was no one to officiate; the assembled and regretful congregation were informed that their beloved and respected minister had been seized with sudden indisposition; but the news spread, spread like ignited flax, that his betrothed had fled—fled with another; then every heart execrated her infidelity, every heart deplored his disappointment.

What a Christmas-day was that for us! how different to the one anticipated only a few short hours before! "Truly our feasts had been turned into mourning, and all our songs into lamentations;" we were sadder, far, far sadder, than if my sister had been lying in an upper chamber DEAD; for she had deceived our hearts, returning ingratitude for kindness—treachery for confidence—and disappointment for the holiest hopes that were ever founded on a maiden's faith.

As if to harmonise with our distress—as if in unison with our melancholy, it snowed violently and without intermission throughout that most interminable day, so that the whole aspect of the country, as far as the eye could reach, was wrapped in the sad same whiteness, as if Nature was enveloped in the cold shroud of universal dissolution.

This had so drifted in many parts during the night, as to render all transit impossible; and a severe frost coming upon it, travelling was out of the question, so that for six weary weeks we were obliged to affect the warmest hospitality, and look cheerfully on those whose absence would have been an absolute mercy; for, besides the mutual restraint naturally felt by all parties, owing to the terrible bar the conduct of the fugitives

had placed between us and our guests, each one of us longed for solitude; longed to be alone to commune with his own heart; longed to weep without the fear of detection; longed to pray without the dread of interruption; longed, in fact, to pour out that heart's bitterness to its very dregs in the stillness of his own chamber.

My mother, after vainly struggling against the painful tension of feeling this state of ceremonious exertion required, fairly gave way to her agony of soul, taking to her bed, to bewail, in her too partial anguish, for the guilty daughter who had cast this shadow over the sunset of her declining day, forgetful of the sympathy due to the virtuous and dutiful one, whose sole study it was still to brighten that darkened twilight.

Jessie never wrote home; that was as well, for what could she say in extenuation of her fault?—Nothing! We read her marriage in the papers—her safe arrival at Madras—and then we endeavoured to think of her as of one separated from us for ever in this world.

One by one the heart-broken victims of her turpitude dropped into the peaceful grave. Charles went first; then, one after the other, my beloved parents and kindred; until I stood alone, quite alone, in the house of my fathers. And, oh! how LONELY! Yet, whom could I associate with a sorrow such as mine?

After years of suffering, which cannot be described; regret, which cannot be imagined; darkness and silence of heart, which cannot be thought of unshudderingly; lo! came her little girl, her first-born child, her breathing image, like a winged and radiant messenger of light, to beam refulgently on that long-gloomed heart, to speak, as with the voice of melody, to the mute anguish, so long, long rendering hushed as death its dismal chambers. Yes! Jessie—the repentant Jessie—had sent the sweet bird so long nestled in her own bosom, to refuge in mine—to sing of summer-time for it again; to break in upon the cypress-wave solitude of its lonely bower, like the sunlight breaks on the forest gloom; to scatter the flowers of her fair innocence around; to tell, in the artless language of simplicity, of that sister's sorrow, tears, remorse, and contrition, in her self-imposed, but, doubtlessly, most deplored exile. To tell how that sister bewails the blight she cast upon my youth—to ask forgiveness for that blight—and shall I be unrelenting? Shall I be implacable? Oh! no, no, no; a thousand times, no!—Those tears atone for all; those secret tears, those bitter tears, not DARED to be shed before the husband, lest he, too, should feel a latent pang for his early and betrayed love!

How I longed to kiss those tears off my sister's cheeks! How I longed to assure her of my free and entire forgiveness! How I studied, for her DEAR sake, to devise how the coming Christmas should indeed prove as MERRY as possible, for the darling who came to me so endearing in her inherited loveliness—so endearing in the hallowed claims of memory—so DOUBLY endearing in the appellation she bore—for Jessie, as a crowning act of expiation, had named her ALICE. Soon, soon, wafted over the ocean to that distant clime where she now dwells, with all her deep heart-yearnings for the land of her birth, the home of her childhood, shall be the glowing account of the MERRY CHRISTMAS the young Alice spent with the aged Alice, who strove, with devoted zeal and affection, to make it resemble in every way the BYGONE ones, spent at the same age, and many, many years after, by her mother, and her then most happy, most happiness-dispensing sister.

"LOOKING BACK."

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

We are advised in certain religious books, each night, when we lie down in our beds, to consider the several proceedings of the day, and to determine their good or evil nature. I do not care to discuss now whether I am called upon so to employ a portion of the time allotted for rest and sleep, but I quite assent that, adopted in a right spirit, and to a reasonable extent, the practice of "looking back" is productive of benefit, and so, worthy of commendation. The first thing to be done, when a managing body are assembled, is to read the minutes of the last meeting; so that there having been made known, that most important point, "where they left off," and there having, beside, been laid bare what on the last occasion was short done, and what (as has been proved by subsequent events) was badly done, the meeting are in a favourable position for the proceeding with the business; the rectifying, as far as may be, the errors previously committed, the supplying the deficiencies of which they have been guilty, and, instructed and warned by the past, for the acting in future with more of wisdom, and with greater energy, than have been heretofore displayed.

Let us, as a nation, on the 1st of January, 1851, read the minutes of 1850. Let us calmly and dispassionately peruse the record of our sayings and our doings. Let us see where we were on the 1st of January, 1850, and trace our steps from that time until now; and while taking credit for those things wherein we may fairly consider we have acted wisely and well, let us not shrink from acknowledging, if our eye light upon portions of the minutes which stand in judgment against us, evidencing our folly or our weakness, our rashness or our sloth, the full extent of our misdoing; rather let us penitentially express our regrets, and, at the same time, firmly and courageously resolve on reformation and amendment.

Now I cannot here undertake the task of examining, *seriatim*, the events of the year just concluded. I do not know that we can regard it as an important year; there have come to pass no startling occurrences upon which we might dwell; and its main incidents, the sudden loss of the chief statesman of later years, and a very absurd act committed by his holiness the Pope, have been contemplated and pondered over so much (and the latter so recently) that it would be nauseous to enlarge upon them in this place. But there is one feeling that, on a general view, rises forcibly within me, and this feeling I am anxious to express.

I am discontented with the progress we have made during the past year. I do not see that clear and manifest improvement which, I think, might have been effected. Without indulging in anything like extravagant language, without being lured into sacrificing truth for the sake of penning a "slashing" paragraph, I assert that the need, the desperate, overwhelming need existing at the present time for calling into action the brightest mental ability our country can boast, combined with the utmost energy and the most undaunted determination, ought to be, soon *will be*, apparent to every individual. There never was a time when

there was such a grave call for consideration as the present. This is termed an enlightened age—the march of intellect; to hear people talk, one would think our forefathers were idiots, and, intellectually, we towered above them as giants. Reader, it is not true. Education is more diffused; accomplishments more prevail; but if there have been any change in regard to intellect in its lofty perfection, it has been for the worse, and mental power has declined. The mass are, indeed, raised; brutish ignorance exists no longer in our land; the people are elevated; they understand now matters formerly altogether beyond their range; they can reason, and argue, and cavil, and dispute; and they can murmur and complain. And though God forbid that I should say one word against the spread of knowledge and the improvement of mind, I do see that by and through this very fact, under present circumstances, a danger is created. If you have so raised the humbler classes that their eyes are opened, their minds expanded, their hearts made to beat quicker, their desires rendered stronger—if you have assimilated them more or less to the higher ranks in all save wealth and worldly dignity—and if, while raising them intellectually, you have not opened channels through which intellectuality may be turned to account, so that it is the same hard, up-hill journey as of old, for the clever man to push his way to independence—if this be so, and (though a change is working) it *is* so at this moment, do you not see the danger to which I point? What say you to the probability of the near approach becoming nearer? What say you to the chance of a treading on the heels? and then, why not the jostle?—afterward, why not the quarrel and the struggle?—if the struggle, why not the bloodshed?—and if the bloodshed, whose shall be the victory?

Was there ever a time when politics were so much discussed as now? Women and boys talk politics, and furiously express their opinions. Debating societies and discussion classes are the rage. Grave questions are entered upon by the million, and not merely by the few. Years back, the task of considering, revising, correcting, or abrogating the laws, and of devising fresh enactments, was left, comparatively speaking, to a small number of individuals. The mass but little interfered. In the then state of education such matters were beyond them, and they lived and died, murmuring and discontented, mayhap, but otherwise quiet and peaceful. This is not so now; we have educated our poorer classes—we have invested them with vastly more power—we have not left them in that state of ignorance, and consequent impotence, that they had no choice but to go whither they were driven, no ability to turn upon their masters and free themselves from their yoke. The case is altered now; the poorer classes are educated, they are enlightened; they rest not under the old dark cloud—the sun has visited them, has cheered them, encouraged, strengthened, ennobled them. And what is the result? Why, that mere mechanical labour—labour involving only fatigue of body, affording not the slightest opportunity for exercising the mind, is now groaned under and hated by numbers, who, had they lived in former years, would have settled down to it as their inheritance, and been satisfied with it. And these men are struggling, and will struggle yet more hotly and energetically, to free themselves from this toil, and to strike into a path more suited to their powers, and more in accordance with

their inclinations. I say they will struggle; for, even at this time, what opposition have they to encounter—how are arrayed against them prejudice and pride—and even where these are absent, coldness and indifference. But they will struggle—the men who feel that they have something in them which constitutes a claim to be employed otherwise than in mere manual labour—these men will daily grow more desirous to be relieved from this labour, and to take the upper stations of life. To this period they *might* have struggled, and, in most cases, have struggled in vain. In an article which appeared in this magazine a short time back, entitled "Aid to Talent," I endeavoured to show how many were the chances against gifted men attaining worldly prominence, and displaying and exercising their talents for the welfare, far less of themselves than of their kind. But then I say that these are times when there is so growing a feeling that such a state of things ought not to be—that the majesty of mind, and the glory of intellect, in all gradations, are really and truly matters not to be flippantly talked about and lightly regarded, but to be weighed with solemn earnestness, to be nourished with fondest affection, to be encouraged with ardent love, and to be brought forward and displayed with hearty cheer and fervent grasp—no matter whether such intellectual strength be in the peer or the peasant, no matter whether it reside in the millionnaire or the pauper—I say there is now so stern and increasing a feeling, that in these dark and difficult times we ought to, we *must*, give homage and encouragement to talent wherever it may be found; that I am sure very soon the way of clever men to prosperity, proportioned to their ability, will be wonderfully freed from those obstacles and hindrances that heretofore have made their attempted journey almost hopeless.

I say I am satisfied this will be the result. Those who in former times would have only been born poor and insignificant, have so remained, will, having arisen in our days, by the circumstance of their intellectual superiority, be great among us. And who would not be glad if the wisest were the greatest and most powerful? Who would wish to stem the onward progress of those who have been gifted by God with more of mental ability than their fellows? Who would withhold the hand and not help them forward to their true position? Alas, that I should say it, multitudes there are who, if they would not absolutely throw obstacles in the way, would yet treat intellect so coldly, so indifferently, so carelessly, that they might be fairly charged with virtually doing battle against it. And to particularise;—by this I mean that, in the first place, there are men—men in this nineteenth century—who openly avow a distaste and dislike to the education of the poor, the simple, bare instruction in the commonest matters, and who would shudder at the notion of rendering any marked encouragement to a clever but poor man. There are but few such individuals, thank God. But, in the second place, there are men—and these constitute the majority—who would laugh scornfully at what I would suggest for the aiding of talent. I would propose that there should be an endeavour to make government appointments a means of assisting talent; that is to say, I think that, instead of these appointments being invariably given to relatives and friends of those in power, a portion of them, at all events (the portion that might, on consideration, be deemed most suitable), should be bestowed as premiums upon such

candidates as should be regarded as having the greatest claim, and those things which should constitute superiority of claim should not be the most business-like manner, or the most pleasing address (although, of course, there would be requisite the possession of *sufficient* qualifications for the office, otherwise inconvenience would be occasioned), but the evidence of the possession of clearly superior mental ability. I think, that while you might through these appointments meet a claim beginning to be more or less clamorously urged by such of the middle and lower classes, who, with greater ability and intelligence than the majority of the present holders of such appointments find themselves, being blest with neither aristocratic patrons nor influential friends, absolutely excluded therefrom, while you might effect this object and work this good, you might, through such judicious exercise of patronage, work, in some cases, a still more important and considerable advantage. If, for instance, there were elected to a government appointment, not a protégé of a minister, but a clever-gifted man, to whom it would work the peculiar advantage of supplying him with the necessaries of life, and enabling him (its duties not being onerous) to pursue in periods of leisure a more congenial occupation, an occupation which he might in consequence so embrace and so turn to account, that by-and-by he might relinquish his appointment to another deserving individual, requiring similar help for a term, and himself come before the world in his true and real character, and earn his bread by those means by which God had peculiarly fitted him to earn it,—means, too, which, while their exercise would be an absolute happiness to him, would be fruitful of the highest advantage to his fellow-creatures—I say, if this were so, who does not see the desirability, even if regard be had to only these comparatively few cases, of the attempt, at all events, being made, to create a good out of these government appointments which has never been associated with them yet? And further (but I wish to observe that I am not now setting forth a well-considered or carefully digested plan; I am merely offering suggestions to be weighed in wiser heads than mine), it seems to me that some aid might be afforded to talent in this way. Could not rewards be proffered for oratorical excellence? Could not exhibitions of oratory periodically take place—and could not such candidates, whose displays should show clearly the possession of unquestionable oratorical power, be enabled (I am presuming now, of course, that none would be allowed to become competitors but such as should need pecuniary help) to pursue a profession wherein this peculiar gift would be fully exhibited and turned to best account? Again, why might not rewards be offered for literary efforts (the same restriction as to the class of candidates being observed), and why might not such as should prove themselves clever thinkers and able writers, be encouraged and assisted to pursue the avocation for which they have evidenced they are best fitted, and thus be rendered happy themselves and the means of conferring good upon their kind? Ay, but you say, consider the expense—consider the taxes under which we labour—the carrying out of your suggestions would shockingly increase them. I admit the expense would be heavy, but might it not be met by reduction in those matters upon which money is now so unworthily spent; and if there were a balance, and we were still out of pocket, should we not have an equivalent in the vast increase of clever men, an equivalent in the fact of their being in full action, working

for the common good, an amount of talent upon the mere shadow of which this country would never had gazed before? But, you say further, it would come to pass, as a consequence of our raising up these men, rich now in nothing but ability, that, by slow but sure degrees, the exalted at the present time would be thrust from their places, the government would fall into quite new hands, and the strange sight might be seen of sons of mechanics and tradesmen having the rule and guiding the nation. I grant it; and why not? If those sons of tradesmen and mechanics should be intellectually best fitted to govern, why should they not govern? A plan for a nation's weal—what matter whether it issue from the brain of the labourer or the lord? Do not let me be misunderstood. I am not now advocating rank radicalism. I am not supporting levelling principles —Heaven forbid! But I am pleading for intellect; I am pleading the cause of mental ability; I am asserting that we should do our best to discover wise men, and then that we should make the most of those wise men, and turn them to most profit. I say that the strongest claim for exaltation is the possession of superior merit, that that merit should be sought, that it should be looked for in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west; that it should be encouraged and exhorted to show itself, and that, having so shown and proved itself, it should be nourished and fostered, it should be placed in a fitting arena, and there it should work for the good of its possessor and for the welfare of the nation and of mankind.

But you may, perchance, laugh me to scorn. I feel, that were the rulers of this land to peruse my remarks, they would laugh me to scorn. Then I fall back upon the observations I made at the outset. Your disregard of the claims of intellect, how will it work? Many who might have been a glory to the nation will go down into their graves unnoticed and unknown—yes, many, but not all—there will be numbers left, and these numbers will gather together and struggle upwards against every obstacle, and in defiance of every opposition. Each day will give them new power, each difficulty with which our country may be beset will, so to speak, cast them onward in their journey; and if, as they come nearer and nearer; if, as they see more clearly their strength and the certainty of their eventual triumph, they should find themselves still combated and hindered; if they should find—these men, whose way education has cleared, these men of great minds and warm hearts and strong desires, flushed with success and the consciousness of a good cause—that still, still, their course is slow because pride and folly, as heavy weights, have to be rolled before them—is there anything strange in the fear, unreasonable in the apprehension, that there may ensue, at last, a *collision*—and if a collision, a train of evils, at the bare notion of which the frame trembles and the blood chills?

It was a noble idea that of the Exhibition of Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-One, and I would regard it as likely to give birth to and be followed by other concessions equally noble and equally beneficial. If we encourage competition in one department; if we show ourselves careless of anything save the important end of attaining as far as may be unto perfection in arts and manufactures, so that, if the humblest workmen in the land were to give evidences at this exhibition of pre-eminent skill and superior taste, the prize would be awarded to him, whoever might have been his rivals; if this be so, why should not a same spirit be displayed generally? Why

should it not be that talent of any description should be eagerly sought, gladly found, and rejoicingly rewarded?

But, looking forward to another Christmas-day, and writing under the feelings that the gazing upon that day of days never fails to create, I will cast aside all bitterness, will, for the time at least, repress all apprehension, and utter a fervent, hearty wish, that all may know a merry Christmas (for Christmas *time* will not have finished when this is read) and a happy New Year. And yet—*all*—that cannot be, for Christmas is a period when, if any dark change shall have occurred since last it dawned upon us, that change will fling itself upon our minds, and whither will have fled our joy? Last Christmas-day may have seen us with companions who are now dust; our stock of happiness may, during the last twelve months, have wasted; there may appear but little left; so that to wish that *all* might be happy, were to wish an impossibility. Yet we will not recal the expression—let the wish go, and may there, on the dawning of the first day of a new year, gush forth fresh springs of happiness of which we may all freely and heartily drink!

TO THE CHILD OF A POETESS.

BY CAROLINE DE CRESPIGNY.

Dear Theo! in those heavenly eyes
A little world of mystery lies.
For their soft lights, so sad and mild,
More than the wisdom of a child,
They speak of scenes Elysian, brought
From other stars; of mines of thought,
That dim and indistinctly lie
Hid in the caves of memory,
Waiting one day to be unfolded.
That chiselled lip, so finely moulded,
The seat of beauty and expression,
And poetry, and love, and passion,
With which, by wood and mountain bred,
Thy soul in infancy was fed;
Thy sweet and melancholy grace,
That pensive mien, that serious face
Portend what all who feel must know—
A sympathy with others' woe.
With childhood flown, oh! may they be
No augury of ill for thee!
Live, angel child! her years to bless
Who dotes on thee with love's excess
Share thou the glory of her name,
And bear to distant lands your fame!

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CURATE'S LIFE.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

My father was a clergyman of the Church of England, a tutor of St. Bees, in Cumberland, and afterwards rector of a small benefice of some seventy pounds a year in that county, while my mother was one of twelve children of a deceased captain in the army, who had given up his life for his country on the plains of India. From such a source, then, it will not be inferred my family were possessed of an over-abundance of the riches and good things of this world. My father was distinguished alike for his sound principles of doctrine as for his practical benevolence and deep humiliation of soul, and withal a profound scholar; but throughout his life the opportunity of advancement was denied him, and while others—mere superficials when compared to him—won the honours and golden opinions in the great battle of life, he was tussling with an adverse fortune in an obscure parsonage—unknown—forgot! while my mother, although as thrifty a housewife as her chequered bringing-up would have led you to have supposed, had not the miraculous power of turning our few "daily loaves and fishes" into a city feast; and few people, perchance, were a better corroborative evidence of the old maxim, "as poor as a church mouse," than my worthy parents. I was destined from my birth to follow my father's footsteps; and as soon as I had well learnt to read, the good rector commenced the foundation of a sound religious and classical education, which, in the innocence of his heart, he truly believed would heap honour and glory and riches upon our house. At ten years of age I left home for a grammar-school in the neighbourhood, and at fifteen returned again to prepare for an university career, previous to taking orders. The first grand question that presented itself was, "What college was I to go to?" My father naturally leant towards his bantling, and St. Bees found favour in his eyes; while my mother, partly from woman's natural ambition, and partly from the divine maxim, that "a prophet is not without honour but in his own country," thought, by pinching and screwing, and denying themselves a few comforts, for luxuries they had none, they might send me further from home. Matters were, however, to remain in abeyance until my mother's uncle, Colonel Fullalove, had been consulted on the subject, and he was to give the casting vote. The gallant colonel was a soldier of the ancient *régime;* a man who had won each step, from ensign to command, at the point of the sword (in those days valour and bravery ensured promotion. in these trigonometry and Euclid the issue has still to be seen), and though he had cheered on many a charge of "the Fighting Fusileers," and stormed many an enemy's breach, yet he had about as much knowledge of the properties of the circle, or algebra, or which university inculcated the most healthy and purest doctrines of faith and religion, or which preserved best the youthful mind from heresy and schism, as the sunken and benighted Bosjaman does of the worship of God supreme!

Now the most popular man in the Fighting Fusileers (and a great favourite with the colonel) was certainly Lieutenant Errington, who had joined them some eight months previously, and who was currently reported in his regiment to have been at Oxford and *not* to have taken his degree there. So when the colonel, after he had read and re-read my mother's despatch relative to my college education, and had pooh-poohed and humph-humphed at it, and wondered what the deuce *he* should know about universities and education, turned in his dilemma to Errington, whom he found quietly enjoying in his own room his siesta of a pipe and a pot of "half-and-half," while he amused himself by tickling the cropped ears of a hugh under-jawed bull-dog. The lieutenant was particularly happy, and flattered to a degree. It was the first time in his life his advice had ever been asked; and by the colonel too—and on a subject of knowledge and education too!

"Gad, sir! Christ Church is the place. For though they behaved badly to me, sir, I forgive them; yes, sir, rusticated me for driving tandem, and plucked me for my little go. Forgive them though, sir; and such a connexion there too, sir. Lord Twopenny had rooms next to mine, and Sir Charles Doubledeal was rusticated the same term as I was—yes, sir. But mind, colonel, they enter him as a gentleman commoner—a tuft—much jollier life, sir."

"Thank ye, thank ye," replied the colonel. "Christ Church, Oxford. Very well."

So, accordingly, the colonel sat down and wrote in reply to my mother's letter, first, ten or twelve concise and set lines of the pleasure it afforded him to further the interests and welfare of any branch of his family; secondly, that he was equally surprised at my mother seeking *his* advice on such a subject, when her husband's must be so superior, as well as that there could not be a question as to which *was* to be the college—why, Christ Church, Oxford, to be sure. Then added, "of course he must be entered as a *gentleman commoner*," and finished by *the* connexion.

As my father read the concluding lines, he laid down the letter and burst into a hearty roar of laughter. "Why thy uncle's out of his mind, Marian," said he, turning to my mother, and the whole matter would have been quickly treated as mere *badinage*, or an utter ignorance of scholastic affairs, and I most likely have dropped into a more lucrative and secular profession, had not the word "connexion" raised a thousand visions of fat pluracies, deans, mitres, and aprons, in the mind of my mother; and "interests" and "welfare," and a few qualms, in that of my father, as Fullalove was a bachelor with a good banker's book—something "comfortable" in the funds; and withal not a marrying man, and my mother heiress-apparent to his little hard-earned savings. So, accordingly, my father set about the most feasible plan of getting me into that college as a servitor, risking the chance of my uncle, the colonel, finding out I was not a "gold tuft," or, if he did, the chance of his knowing the difference between the two gradations, as the old veteran had not volunteered an iota towards the sinews of war to carry on my university campaign.

So, six months after the receipt of the colonel's letter, I duly matriculated, and was entered as a *servitor* at that most aristocratic of aristocratic colleges, Christ Church, Oxford.

From my childhood upwards my father had, with pertinacious care, instilled into my mind that an universal benevolence was one of the chief dictates of society. Christian charity, and brotherly love one toward another, were in my father's opinion the noblest attributes of our nature; and daily were these sentiments practised by the good old man at our humble parsonage gate, as all the vagrant train—the sick, the lame, the blind, and halt, full well knew—

> Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
> He pity gave ere charity began.

With such opinions, then, firmly implanted in my breast, with such sentiments firmly engraved on my heart, with the glorious example of such a father constantly recurring to my thoughts,—unsophisticated by the mammon of this life—ambitious, yet charitable,—I looked upon this world as a vast parterre of verdure, riches, and goodness, peopled by unsophisticated men. My first fortnight at Oxford, however, dispelled these day-dream illusions, and laid the foundation of that strength of mind to bear the buffets and storms, and afflictions and disappointments, of my after-life. I found boys who were yesterday fags at Eton, or having their shins kicked at Harrow, suddenly transformed to men. The transition was as electric as one of Herr Doobler's pythonic deceptions. The white cravat was changed for the fashionable tie, or the round jacket for the blue surtout, and the chrysalis was complete. I was ambitious; I yearned for honours, and for a name and for renown; but I was not so besotted by selfishness as to feel hatred and jealousy towards a more fortunate competitor who had outstripped me in the race to fame. The great Johnson, in a conversation with Dr. Burney, observed, "No man is angry at another for being inferior to himself." Might not that great moralist have still further seen, and said, "How few men are freed from the leaven of malice and jealousy at the success and promotion of another!" In the bitterness of the struggle of life have these sentiments been wrung from my heart! I am not one of your mawkish sentimentalists who looks upon a man as naturally vicious and bad because he has a good coat on his back, and the price of his dinner in his pocket; nor yet can I deify the dirty young urchin who has been removed from the sinks of iniquity in St. Giles to Pentonville Prison for picking an old gentleman's pocket; but when I saw myself a victim to a system which seemed to indemnify itself by inflicting indignities for conferring benefits,—when I saw the boy of yesterday with all the vices of manhood, but unrestrained by the virtues of age and experience,—when I saw the lordling, who had been kicked and cuffed at Eton for not having the tea-table spread, or the beer brought from Jack Knight's, or well swished for his stupidity over his Virgil or verses, flattered and indulged at Oxford, simply because he wore a gold tuft, and had a title prefixed to his name,—and when I saw the goal of honours was attained by them, not through the rugged path of study and of exertion, of sleepless nights, and of wear and tear of body and of mind, but by the easy road of interest and connexion,—my blood and indignation then boiled within me, and made me despise a world that could with such sordid loyalty give title, knee, and approbation to prosperous semblances, and fall down and worship tricked-out pump-handles!

After three years hard study at Christ Church, I went up for my degree in class; and trust that I may not be deemed to be egotistical by my readers when I further add, I took it, and a "double first." As my mind turned back in retrospection over that period, methought it the dark page in the book of life; as I now turn upon a mournful and troubled existence, how bitterly the fallacy thrusts itself upon my thoughts. I had been caught, as it were a Shetland pony, on my native hills of Cumberland, rough, shaggy, and unbroken. I had been brought and tutored in the *manège* of learning, science, and art; and painful as the bit may be when first placed in the animal's mouth, or the spurs when first applied to his flanks, I verily believe the training of an unsophisticated, artless lad into the polished cosmopolite, or the refined man of letters, is not more so.

"Oxford is a jolly place!" "Old Christ Church for ever!" "The happiest time of my life was spent at college!" are the general exclamations of my Lord Happletree, or Sir Derby Rattleaway. True—granted; but then you had your four days a week on old Weller's horses with "the Heythrop;" you had your wine-parties, and your boating-parties, and your tandem-driving, and your flights up to town to close the eyes of dying grandmothers (for which read, "to see the Opera and Almack's"); but I will take leave to say you never composed an Iambic in your life, nor pored over Herodotus or Homer, except when reduced to the English prose, aided by graphic similes of the "ring," or London life, of your "coach!" Oh, ye of purple and fine linen! you little know what it is to suffer poverty amongst plenty, nor the taunting pangs of worldly inferiority, trampled on by a blind and selfish superiority!

I sincerely trust that my readers may not, from the foregoing remarks, prejudge me, and form the hasty conclusion that I, because I have railed against my social position at college, must necessarily be some soured misanthrope or sordid votarist, who would exclaim with Timon of Athens, "Destruction fang mankind." Far otherwise. Those lines were penned in the heyday of my youth, when my feelings were more sensitive to injury or insult, and ere I had mingled in the world, and learnt by experience the distinctions Society vouchsafed to rank and wealth. I now fervently trust that a ten years' ministry in the service of my God has so tempered my mind and disposition to a more humble and patient frame, that I may be now deemed a meet subject for "holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience," and a wholesome example of the flock of Christ, my Saviour!

My readers may still further imagine that my college career was *totally* unmarked by any friendships whatever; but I had a few. Some in my own grade of life, who are now toiling up the rugged path to preferment and competency, and others, too; but in these I have been singularly unfortunate in any assistance. Sir Raby Harkaway, for instance—a good-humoured, round-faced, powerfully-built young baronet—swore by everything emphatic that I should have the advowson of a fat living in his gift; but before he could put his charitable design into execution, he unfortunately dislocated his neck while riding a match across country against Captain Popkins, of the "Heavies." Lord Sanscrit, again, was my firm friend. I wrote his themes and iambics, and he promised that I, and I only, should be his chaplain, with a snug contingency of I don't

know how many family livings; but my aspiring hopes were hardly raised but to be crushed, for, a month after, my lord eloped with a skip's daughter, and brought his own life as well as scandal to a climax by being shipwrecked off Tunis; while my excellent friend Eastwood, afterwards a missionary bishop, was served up as a *bonne bouche* for a chieftain in Owyhee; and B—ne is far too much engrossed with the affairs of Downing-street to turn his mighty mind to so humble an individual as your most obedient servant.

I took a long and lasting farewell of old Christ Church, and departed for the silvery glades, rural retreats, and snug parsonage of my father in Cumberland, where I continued my readings preparatory to taking holy orders; and after passing the examination of the chaplain, I was duly admitted into the sacred ministry by the Archbishop of York, and from thence I accepted the office of curate to a very excellent, but very poor, clergyman in that diocese, where the qualification for the title of priest, on account of his extreme poverty, was deemed an equivalent for my services. After a sojourn here for twelve months, which, from the quiet, blameless life, the unaffected piety, and childlike innocence of my worthy rector, was one of the white specks on "memory's waste," I left the blessed retreat of piety and peace for the noise, the turmoil, and callousness of a London life, where I obtained the appointment of preacher in one of the large churches in that vast city. To attempt to describe the accumulation of crime, filth, and pestilence, which pervaded the vicinity of my cure, would be sufficiently ample and important for a separate paper, and, at the same time, however interesting the details might be to the moral economist or politician, I very much doubt whether they would be equally admissible to the favour and amusement of the general reader.

My stipend was small indeed; my duties many and arduous, and withal I had to turn to the labour of the pen, and endeavour, by literary job work, to eke out a sufficient subsistence, and a moderate supply of the humblest articles of raiment.

It was a dreary autumnal evening, when the equinoctial winds were raising from the streets a thousand little eddies of dust and dirt, and whirling them up dark alleys and down by-streets, and into people's eyes, and against well-cleaned panes—when it was dark and dreary and cold without—when the tumult and din of business had ceased, and the streets were deserted save by the houseless wanderers or the hurrying wayfarers, that I sat in my lonely room poring, by the midnight taper, over an Essay which I was compelled to finish by the morrow for one of the literary reviews. For some hours I had worked hard at my subject. I had followed up my proposition, step by step, subjoining a continued argument, regular dissertations, proofs and explanations thereon, when, on arriving at the concluding issue, my brain, from continued exertion, became so confused, my system so fevered, and my pulse so high, that I found it utterly impossible to proceed. The printer's boy was to call punctually at nine in the morning; I, therefore, thought my only chance of obtaining fresh inspiration was by taking a turn in the street and getting a mouthful of fresh air to clear my brain. I seized my hat and reached the streets; the night was dark and lowering, and a ragged and tattered beggar predicted it would be a "dirty night, yer honour." I

paid but little attention to his words, but journeyed onwards. My mind was carried away by the stream of thought. I again commenced the argument on which I had been engaged. I worked up the proposition from the commencement, and I had just arrived at the issue when a few large drops of rain fell heavily on the pavement, quickly followed up by a sharp shower, so that I pretty plainly saw that, except I hurried my movements and reached some hospitable shelter, I should be very soon drenched to the skin. After a few seconds' walk I beheld the very place I was in search of, and turning down the covered entry I discovered that the retreat was already occupied by a young girl, whose tawdry finery, summer raiment and dripping parasol, but too plainly and painfully indicated her calling and course of life.

"I am afraid it will be a rainy night, sir," observed the girl, after a silence of some five minutes, during which time we had watched the shower and the cataracts of rain as they rushed down the gutters.

"I am afraid so," I replied, fidgeting about, and feeling loth to form the acquaintance of such a person; and then I continued muttering to myself, "I am afraid I shall be wet through before I get home."

"Home!" exclaimed the girl, with such a bitter emphasis, that I felt a thrill run through my whole frame; "home! there is no home for the wicked."

I remained silent, and attentively examined my companion. Her features were singularly regular and prepossessing, her eye soft and melting, and her glossy hair clustered over a brow fair, smooth, and bright with intelligence; and, though penury and care had set their ravages on her pallid cheeks, she had still the vestiges of great beauty.

"Be still awhile, remorseless prejudice, and let the genuine feelings of thy soul avow they do not truly honour virtue who can insult the erring heart that would return to her sanctuary," said the girl, looking me full in the face, as if she read my thoughts.

I was struck by the words; more so, perhaps, than had I been a play-going man, and known they were a quotation from "The Stranger." My conscience struck me. My heavenly Example had herded with publicans and with sinners, and poured the balm of consolation into the repentant heart of the unfortunate and the unfriended.

"I am afraid this rain will delay you," I observed, "and cause anxiety to your friends."

"Friends, sir? I have none; nor home, nor parents. Lost! — all lost!—happiness here and hereafter. I am alone on the wide world of life, without one pitying heart, one soothing, sympathising breast, or one gentle mind who would hold out the hand of kindness to the lost child of sin and sorrow."

"But, my poor girl, your own folly or wickedness must have brought you to this state," I replied. "Your words bespeak a better station, and no ordinary advantages of education."

"It was, sir; it was," exclaimed the girl, bursting into tears; "it was, sir. Love with women is their sole existence; and—and I loved him with the life of passion; and as Shakspeare says, sir,

> For stony limits cannot hold love out,
> And what love can do that dares love attempt."

"Rest assured, such sophistry as that, from its very reasoning, is certain ruin to any girl," I said. "However, you mentioned *home* just now in such a bitter strain, that I almost fear you have not the means of procuring a night's lodging."

"You are right, sir; I have not. And believe me when I say I have not tasted a morsel of food this day, although I have had to feign the winning smile and happy look, as if no canker gnawed my heart."

"Poor child!" was my only exclamation, and with a deep sigh I emptied the contents of my scanty purse, small as it was, and breakfastless as it would leave me, into her hands.

"May the blessings of an all-seeing Providence be showered down upon your head," fervently said the girl. "And, believe me, if the prayers of a lost, degraded woman availeth aught in the presence of the Mercy-seat, they will be freely offered up this night for your happiness and welfare. And think not, because some of our sex have, through inveterate vice and ignorance, fallen into such a course of life, and sunk so low in pollution and crime that the headsprings of their every attributes of Good are dried up, and their sole aim is to satisfy an unsatiable thirst for ardent spirits—for they sacrifice life and immortality, not for love and affection, but the gin-bottle—until their presence is a loathing, and their approach a deadly pestilence, that we are all in the same scale and class. Nay, believe me, the majority of us unfortunates have fallen through misplaced confidence or the villany of false men, and have enjoined on ourselves, by the pangs of conscience, a more anguishing punishment than ever emanated from the fertile brains of the most cruel of tyrants; and that we would give half our future lives to be allowed repentance and an asylum where we might save our souls alive, and be at peace with all."

As the weather had changed, and the rain ceased, and a policeman —who had quite overlooked the bacchanalian strains of a very drunken mechanic, who was loudly proclaiming in the neighbourhood that he would not go home till morning, or, rather, until daylight did appear—and had come over the street, and ordered us "to move on, and not to be a collecting in the public thoroughfares," I thought it best to return to my rooms and my study; so, wishing the girl a good night, I made an appointment with her for the morrow, when I was to hear her tale of woe, and, I trusted, to attain a reconciliation and forgiveness for her from her friends.

JACK DORY, THE FREE-TRADER.

BY W. H. G. KINGSTON, ESQ.

Chapter I.

The untiring waves of the changeful ocean have in vain expended their storm-excited fury for more than half a century since the time of which we write on the bold cliffs of Britain's Isle. Children have been born, have grown up, have become grey-haired men, and have died. Successive kings have ruled the land, and have become dust. Constitutions have been changed; things unthought of have occurred; wonders have been worked; manners and customs have altered; a generation has passed away—the ocean alone, though full of change, is still the same; the rocks and it laugh kings and constitutions to scorn.

On the coast of Dorsetshire, projecting far into the waters of the Channel, is a high and narrow headland well known to seamen by the name of the Bill of Portland.

It consists of a huge mass of fine granite rising abruptly out of the sea, and would be completely an island, were it not joined to the main by a long narrow strip of sand, so narrow, indeed, that in westerly gales the waves wash completely over it. It is generally called the Isle of Portland. On the northern and eastern side of the head is a bay called Portland Bay, which affords anchorage to ships in westerly winds; and further still to the north and on the innermost part of the isthmus is Weymouth Bay, on the shore of which the pretty town of that name is situated, once celebrated as the abode of one of England's best of kings.

The Bill of Portland also forms the eastern side of a deep and large bay called West Bay, of which Berry Head, and the shore on which the beautiful towns of Torquay and Tynemouth are situated, is the west side, the distance across being about thirty miles. On the north side of the Bill and on the shore of West Bay is the village of Chiselton. It is an uncivilised little place, inhabited chiefly by pilots, fishermen, and quarrymen. There are two other little villages or hamlets on the island, one called Weston, on the west side, and the other Wykeham, on the summit of the cliffs above Church Hope Cove, a little deep bay, overlooked by an old castle. The wealth of Portland consists in its stone, and it is full of very valuable quarries which may be profitably worked for centuries yet to come. There is a church in the centre of the island, two windmills, and a few trees in the more sheltered positions. On the summit of the cliff at the very end of the Bill now stand two lighthouses, serving to warn mariners of the surrounding dangers, though in the days of which I write they did not exist.

In a direct line to the south for a distance of several miles, especially during spring tides, whenever there is any wind there runs a furious and dangerous race, known well to seamen by the name of the Race of Portland. This is owing to the broken and rocky nature of the bottom, over which the tide rushes round the headland at a rapid rate. On beholding it one is impressed with the idea that the water is imbued with life or moved by some unseen agency. It tumbles, and leaps, and rolls, and

twists in the most violent and extraordinary manner. When powerfully excited it rushes up the sides and falls bodily down upon the decks of the largest ships, and woe betide the unfortunate bark of small tonnage whose hatches are not securely battened down! A broken plank or shivered spar will alone remain to tell the tale of her fate. Many a vessel running up Channel in hopes of finding shelter in some friendly port has unwittingly approached its dangers; and as the roar of its angry waters has struck upon the ears of the affrighted crew, without any other warning they have found themselves amid a boiling caldron of waves. In vain they attempt to escape—the sea claims them as its prey. The guards of the lighthouses have often seen such approach, and, without the slightest power of rendering assistance, have beheld them sink beneath the wild mad waves. So powerful is the current that a vessel has not, except with a strong breeze, the power of stemming it, and, once within its influence, is unavoidably driven through it. At a point to the east of the Bill the current sets directly off the land into the very centre of the race, so that a boat struggling to gain the shore, if she once reaches that point, must, if it blows hard, be inevitably lost. This point is appropriately called Put-off Point.

To the east of the Bill some three miles off is another dangerous spot, denominated with more than ordinary propriety the Shambles, for numberless have been the unfortunate wretches who have there become the prey of the ocean. It is a ledge of a mile in length, consisting of rock and sand, on which, if the stoutest ship drives, she is quickly broken to pieces by the fury of the waves. Cruel has been the fate of those who, perhaps returning home after a long absence from England, have thus lost their lives within sight of their native shore.

As one sails by the Bill during neap tides, in calm weather, all appears bright and smiling, and the headland itself a picturesque spot, alongside of which a vessel may lie moored to take in her cargo of stone. Such is a very brief description of the Isle of Portland, which we shall find necessary for the clear comprehension of the events in our story.

It was a beautiful evening. The sky was clear; the sun, sinking towards the waters of the west, shone bright and warm, and the slight ripple caused by the light summer wind which played over the sea gaily sparkled as the beams of the glowing luminary fell on them. Few could suppose that that same laughing water could suddenly be aroused to destructive anger.

On the very southernmost point of the headland we have been describing, at a spot on the summit of the cliffs which commanded a clear view up and down the Channel as far as the eye could reach, and also into Portland Roads, a young girl was standing. She was the only human beng on the scene. Her figure was slight and graceful, though small, and almost concealed by a red cloth cloak, with a hood attached—the usual dress of the peasants of that part of the country in those days. Her straw hat had fallen back, disclosing a profusion of light glossy ringlets, which, as the breeze blew them across her fair brow, appeared tinged with a golden hue. Her eyes were large, of a deep blue, and full of expression; and although at first her countenance seemed almost infantine, on a second glance it told of woman's thoughts and woman's feelings—of a guileless heart, yet of a mind no longer childish.

To say that she was simply pretty would not be doing her justice, for she approached to being, if she was not perfectly, beautiful; and although her whole costume was that of a peasant-girl, she possessed a delicacy of complexion, and there was a grace and refinement in her appearance and manner, which made it seem that she must belong to one of the highest grades of society. At her feet lay a remarkably handsome mastiff, who evidently felt that he had committed to him the duty of protecting her from all molestation. One hand rested on her guardian's head, while the other held a long staff or wand, with a flag attached to it. Her gaze was directed towards a vessel which was approaching from the westward. The vessel was a cutter of considerable size, and though heavily rigged, and not to be compared in beauty and symmetry as the graceful fabrics known under that name at the present day, she was superior to most of her class then existing, both in burden and speed, as was evinced by the way in which she slipped through the water. The wind was off the land, with a little westerly in it, so that she could lay well up into West Bay, or fetch round the Bill. The young girl watched the cutter till she thought the flag she held in her hand could be seen from the deck. She then, unfolding it, waved it two or three times in the air. The signal was immediately answered by a small flag run up to the mast-head of the vessel; it blew out for an instant in the breeze, and was again quickly hauled down. On seeing this, she unfastened the flag from the end of the wand to which it was attached, and, letting it hang beneath her cloak, turned to walk toward the centre of the island. She went slowly, as if in a meditative mood, nor did she seem to pay any further attention to the vessel we have been describing. She would stop every now and then, and look at her dog, and pat his head, whereon he would wag his tail slightly; but though she spoke, he seemed perfectly well aware that she was not addressing him.

"I have done as I was directed, but I wish that the task had not been given me," she said, half aloud. "I cannot think we have any right to aid in what is unlawful; but, ah me! my father would not listen to my excuses if I refused to obey him. He would only laugh at what he would call my foolish scruples, and would say he repented having given me an education so much superior to what other girls of my rank in life obtain. Alas! since my poor mother's death, he has never been the same man he formerly was. Some secret care preys on his mind, and makes him severe; or, if he knew how he grieved me, he would not speak as he does." Thus soliloquising, she walked on for a mile and more, when, weary with the exertion, she sat down to rest on a rock, sheltered from the wind by the ground which rose considerably behind her, while the view to the eastward was open, presenting the calm glittering sea and the coast of Dorsetshire about Lulworth Castle.

Her thoughts were sad it seemed, for she pressed her hands before her eyes, to hide the tears which trickled down her cheeks, though there was no one to witness them, with the exception of her dog, who lay crouched at her feet, and looking up with a sympathising glance, full of intelligence, in her face, as if to inquire the cause of her grief.

After a time her thoughts grew calmer, her hands slowly dropped on her lap, and her eyes closed in sleep. Happy is the rest of innocence and youth; then, the slight cares or sorrows of the moment no longer

have power to disturb the tranquillity of the bosom. So slept the maiden, with a sweet smile on her lips and a placid brow. Her faithful companion seemed satisfied, and composed himself with his head on the ground, but not to sleep, for his eyes were open, and his legs extended, ready to spring up in a moment, to do battle in her service.

Time flew on; the sun had sunk beneath the waves, the shades of evening were approaching, and still she slept. Not a sound disturbed her; the soft air fanned her cheek, and the gentle ripple of the water contributed to lull her senses. Fortunately, her dumb companion did not yield to the soothing influences of the moment; on a sudden, his ears erected themselves, he lifted up his head, and then, with a loud fierce bark, sprang forward, but instantly returned to the side of his mistress. The sound awoke her, and she started up with a frightened and confused look, unable to account for the cause of the dog's anger. He continued growling and barking, nor did her caresses tend to soothe him, though he wagged his tail, and looked up affectionately into her eyes, as if to assure her that he would defend her.

"Come," she said, "Nep, we have waited here too long, I fear, and must hie home as fast as we can go." As she spoke she patted her dog's head, and advanced up a slight hill which lay before her. On reaching the summit she paused, for she saw before her a party of four or five men approaching the spot where she was. At the same time her dog manifested the same signs of anger he had before exhibited. One person was in advance of the rest: he was a man of some five or six and thirty years of age, and of good height and figure, and might yet have looked young, had not dissipation already dimmed his eye, and furrowed his brow and cheeks with premature wrinkles. He was dressed in the extreme fashion of the day, with rich lace ruffles and collar, an embroidered waistcoat, and light-coloured long-waisted coat, a flowing wig, with a three-cornered hat, low shoes with buckles, and a sword by his side. Two of his companions wore the Dutch high boots and broad-brimmed hats of fishermen, and a fourth was dressed in a costume of much the same cut, though of coarser materials than the first.

The young girl turned pale as she saw the features of the leader of the party. "Sir James Ousden!" she exclaimed. "Alas! that bad man has come here to persecute me again. I must fly from him, but my strength will scarcely last till I reach home."

No sooner did the person spoken of perceive the maiden, than he rapidly hurried on to meet her. On this, her courage gave way, and she turned aside from the path she had been following to one on the left, which apparently led nearly in the same direction, the intervening ground being broken and uneven. As soon as she began to run, the stranger pursued across the country, evidently hoping to cut her off, but his progress was, fortunately, much impeded by the uneven nature of the ground, his feet suffering from the sharp stones on which he trod.

The dog followed close on the skirts of his mistress's cloak, and it might have appeared that he had partaken in her fear, had he not every now and then turned round with a fierce growl on his pursuer to warn him of the danger of approaching nearer. Sir James Ousden, as she called him, however, did not seem to be daunted by his threats, but, calling on his men to follow, continued the chase.

"Stay, foolish girl!" he exclaimed, "I would not hurt you for worlds;

believe me, fair Jessie—believe me on my honour I would not; then why seek thus to shun me as if I were a fierce beast of the forest?"

His voice only made her run the faster, but her strength soon failed her, and he was on the point of seizing her, when her noble dog, like a good general, seeing that the moment for action had come, turned round with a fierce bark and flew at his throat. In his attempt to avoid the dog, his foot slipped and he fell to the ground. The animal was at his breast in a moment, and would undoubtedly have killed him had not his companions answered his loud shouts for help. The poor girl, her heart in an instant feeling pity for the man who had insulted her, called off the dog; but in this case he refused to obey her, signifying by his looks that now while he held down her pursuer was the moment for her to make her escape. So much engaged was he in looking towards her, that he did not perceive the approach of the other men, and before he had time to stand on the defensive a blow on the head from a heavy bludgeon sent him reeling to a distance. The poor animal could just turn his eyes towards his mistress, as if to say, "Ah! had you followed my advice we might both have been well," before he sank motionless and apparently dead on the ground.

As soon as the gentleman (for such, I suppose, he would have been called) found himself released and unhurt, instead of feeling grateful for the compassion shown towards him, with an angry oath he sprang up to overtake the young girl, while his followers, worthy imitators of their master, were about to drive out any spark of life which might remain in her dog.

She had now neither a defender nor the power of escaping.

"This is unmanly, ungenerous," she exclaimed, as Sir James seized her arm and endeavoured to persuade her to fly with him from the island. "I must repeat it, I have more reason to hate than to love you."

The baronet ground his teeth in anger. "Then if persuasion has no effect, I must use, fair one, a little gentle violence," he cried, dragging her forward. "Come, come, no folly; you have no one here to help you."

"But she has though," exclaimed a man, leaping down from a rock under which they were standing, and dealing a blow on Sir James's breast, which sent him staggering back. "What buccaneering work is this, I should like to know? Hilloa! you scoundrels, if you strike that hound, I'll send a bullet through your skulls as sure as you're alive."

These latter words saved the life of Neptune, and his intended murderers slunk off as if fully believing that the threat would be put into execution. The stranger, by his appearance, was evidently a man not to be trifled with. He was strongly built, of middle height, and about four or five and thirty years of age, though from his sunburnt and weather-worn complexion he, at the first glance, looked much older. He was habited in the rough costume of a seaman, but his dress was cut with nautical precision to fit him gracefully, and the materials were new and good of their sorts. He wore a long flushing coat and high boots, much the fashion among seamen in those days; while a leathern belt was round his waist, in which were stuck, with no attempt at concealment, two brace of handsomely-mounted pistols. His countenance was not unprepossessing, though rather broad, and, surrounded as it was with large whiskers and a full beard, it had rather a wild appearance, and there was

something about the mouth which showed that he possessed great firmness and daring, while his eyes bespoke good humour and high spirits, with, at the same time, boldness and undaunted courage.

"How dare you, you wizen-jawed anatomy, insult a young lady in this way?" he continued, turning to the baronet.

"Who are you, sirrah, who, like a footpad, dares stop an English gentleman in broad daylight?" answered Sir James, furiously regarding the stranger. "If there's law in the land you shall hang for it. Here, you fellows, in the king's name seize that villain, and drag him to the boat."

"Ha, ha, ha! that's a good one," cried the stranger, folding his arms and laughing heartily. "A fig for your law, Sir James. Why, your fellows no more dare touch me, than you would venture to pull the nose of the Great Mogul we hear talk of. If you and your liveried lacquey there like to try it, just do. You've had a taste of my fist already, and my popguns are better weapons than the knitting-needle you carry by your side."

Neither the baronet nor his servant seemed inclined to tempt him to put his threat into execution. The other two men hung down their heads and were moving off.

"Stay!" shouted the stranger. "You, Bill Hodson and Jem Targett, how dared you engage in this work, eh?"

"Why, you see, captain, we was hired by the day, and didn't know the job would interfere with you," answered one of the seamen, who had accompanied Sir James.

"Well, let me never catch you at such work again, that's all," said the stranger, angrily. "And now do you two accompany your precious master there and his lacquey back to their boat, and mind you don't land them on Portland again."

At these words the rage of the baronet outstripped his discretion, and unsheathing his sword he made a rush at the stranger, calling at the same time to his people to assist him. "Fifty crowns to those who will drag that fellow before a magistrate, dead or alive!" he exclaimed. "Fifty more if he is convicted."

The amount of the reward tempted the men, and they returned a few paces.

"If you do," cried the stranger, laughing sarcastically, and drawing a pistol from his belt, "one of you to a certainty will lose the number of his mess."

"Cowards!" shrieked the baronet. "What, are four men to be cowed by one?" And he, backed by his servant, was about to spring on the stranger, when the heads of two other persons were seen above the rocks; they, springing down, soon changed the aspect of affairs. They were dressed as seamen, and armed to the teeth, with cutlasses by their sides and pistols in their belts; their rough weatherbeaten countenances, their large beards and bold air, showing that they were not persons to be trifled with. On seeing them, the three followers of Sir James fairly turned and fled, and their master was fain to follow their example, muttering as he went—"Scoundrel, the law will some day get you in its clutches, and then I shall have my revenge."

"What is it all about, captain?" exclaimed the new comers. "Shall we give chase?"

"No, let the rascals go," answered he who was addressed as captain; "but see what can be done with this poor hound they have so cruelly treated. I would as lief they had lost one of their own worthless lives instead."

While the scene we have been describing took place, and which, as may be supposed, occupied only a few minutes, the young girl leant against the side of the rock to recover her breath; but as soon as she saw that her enemies had retreated, she ran to where her wounded favourite lay, and, throwing herself down by his side, called him by his name. Her voice seemed to arouse the faithful animal, or at all events he began to recover from the blow which had stunned him, and his first effort of returning consciousness was to lift up his head in an attempt to lick her hand. She was still bending over him, when the voice of the stranger startled her.

"Miss Dalling," he said, "the villains have taken to flight; and with your leave I will escort you to your house, where I am bound on a visit to your father. My people shall carry your dog, and I trust that the poor animal will recover. You will not, I hope, refuse me at least the satisfaction of seeing you placed in safety."

He spoke in a softened tone, very different from what he had before used.

"I should be ungrateful if I refused your kindness," answered the young girl, looking up. "And my poor, poor dog, it will, indeed, be good in you to take care of him."

She spoke in a calm tone; which seemed not to please the stranger, for he bit his lips till the blood came; but calming what irritation he might have felt, he ordered the two men to follow with the dog to the house of Captain Dalling. They immediately obeyed, and lifting the animal, who made no resistance, into a litter formed of a large sea-cloak, they bore him after their captain and the young lady, who had refused to move till she saw her favourite raised carefully from the ground. They proceeded as rapidly as she could walk, but she declined any assistance from the stranger; and after she had again expressed her thanks to him for his timely succour, she relapsed into silence; nor did he, fearless and independent as he was, find words to express his feelings. He was evidently chilled by her coldness.

They did not appear well matched. They put one in mind of an eagle and a dove in companionship: and thus they proceeded on their way.

Chapter II.

The principal house in Chiselton, or it should more properly have been called a cottage, as it certainly had no higher pretensions, had been taken some three years before our story commences by a person who announced himself as Captain Dalling. He told no one from whence he came, who were his connexions, or what had been his calling, though, from his superior knowledge of nautical affairs, it was conjectured that he had followed the sea as a profession.

No slight endeavours were made by the gossips of the place to find out something about him, but they were perfectly unsuccessful. The most cunningly devised questions could never make him betray himself.

He had money and paid his way honestly, so he considered that no one had a right to pry into his secrets. He was in deep mourning when he arrived, as was a young girl he brought with him—his only child, it was said, and the female servant who attended on her stated that he had just lost his wife.

This was the sum total of the information gained respecting him. Among the furniture which he brought with him were several cases of books, scientific instruments, specimens of natural history, and other rarities from various parts of the world, as also such instruments of music as were then used by ladies, tambour frames, and other articles for female employment and amusement, so that it was at once conjectured that Miss Dalling was accomplished as well as pretty. Captain Dalling devoted himself to completing the education of his daughter in the branches of knowledge with which he was acquainted, and she seemed neither to weary in attending to his instruction, nor of the secluded life she led on that wild headland. Two years passed tranquilly away, and Captain Dalling appeared contented and happy, and to forget if there existed any former cares, when one evening a stranger claimed admittance at their door. Dalling looked at him narrowly as he entered, and turned pale. The stranger started—the recognition was mutual. Without speaking, Captain Dalling led the way to his study, where, pointing to a chair, his visitor seated himself.

"I thought you were dead," said the stranger. "I never was more taken aback than when you opened the door for me."

"I sometimes am tempted to wish that I were dead," replied Captain Dalling.

"That is unwise, man, when the world contains so many pleasures for those who know how to grasp them," observed the stranger. "Now, from your tone and look, I am sure you think I intend to do you an injury; but you are mistaken. Bygones are bygones; I will not say a word to hurt you, and you in return can do me good service. I swear that I will deal honestly by you. Is it a bargain, man?"

"I have no choice but to agree," answered the captain. "You will not, I trust, be too exacting."

"Oh, no, trust to me. There's my hand upon it."

The stranger soon went away, but he returned several times in the course of the following month, and after having once by chance met Jessie, he came oftener still. His visits evidently gave no pleasure to Captain Dalling, for he was silent and sad for the following day, nor did he recover his accustomed calmness till his daughter's sweet voice soothed him by some plaintive air he loved to hear. The stranger's marked attentions to Jessie at last annoyed her, and though she did her best to keep him at a distance he still persevered, till at length, fearful of offending him, she listened in silence to whatever he chose to say, assuming an unconsciousness of his meaning which was certainly not real. Thus the year passed away.

Captain Dalling, the father of Jessie, was somewhat past the prime of life, though, from his furrowed brow, his careworn cheek and white locks, he looked much older than he really was. His figure was tall and well formed, showing that he once possessed much muscular power; and, his features also must in his youth have been of considerable beauty, but decay was now marked in every lineament.

Shortly before the time at which our story commences, two events had occurred which considerably broke the monotony of their otherwise quiet existence. The first was the appearance of a gentleman at their cottage who had by chance landed on the island in an expedition to shoot wild fowl. He saw Jessie, and was at once smitten with her beauty and artless vivacity; but he was a libertine of the worst class, and cared nothing for the wretchedness and destruction he might cause, provided he could gratify the most transient impulse which might seize him. At first Jessie was, as was very natural that one so young and unsophisticated should be, highly flattered by his attentions; but he came again and again, and the honeyed words which were once so pleasing to her ear became mixed with words which quickly armed her for defence. He had become incautious, from mistaking the blessed ignorance of innocence for lightness and frivolity of character—he little could comprehend the high and noble spirit which dwelt within the bosom of that little girl. Once more he came, and poured the language of the base and profligate world into her indignant ear. She listened at first, for she knew not what he said; but when at last she could no longer misunderstand him, she burst from him with a sense of anger and shame she had never before experienced. Her father, who had been from home, returned, and the man of pleasure, as he called himself, fled with fear from that humble cottage, baffled by a weak girl, but vowing that nothing should prevent him from succeeding in his designs. The result of his next attempt has just been described. The second event to which we allude had but just occurred. A summer's gale had been blowing for some hours with great violence from the north and north-west, accompanied by a continued heavy rain, which confined Jessie to the house during the whole day. Towards the evening it cleared up, and she put on her cloak and bonnet, and, with her faithful dog, hurried down to enjoy the fresh air on the beach. She was amusing herself by throwing sticks into the water, and inducing her dog to bring them back to her, when she perceived a large cutter emerging from the mist which still hung over the sea, and standing directly into the bay. She watched the progress of the vessel, which, with a close-reefed mainsail and storm-jib, flew like a sea-bird over the foaming billows. She looked a thing of life and animation, so buoyantly and confidently she came along. As she drew near, Jessie recognised her as a cutter belonging to the revenue service, and one of the finest afloat. She stood on till she came into comparatively smooth water—though there was even in the bay a heavy sea running—when the helm was put down, and she went about on the other tack, but her foresail was kept to windward, and there she lay, hove-to, with her head to the westward. Thus she remained almost stationary, only slowly forging ahead, but plunging her bows into every wave which swept by, as a water-fowl, dressing its plumage, dips its bill into the water and shakes off the moisture as it again draws it forth. As soon as the cutter was hove-to, a boat was lowered from her quarter, and an officer and a crew of six men were seen to step into her, when her head was at once directed towards the shore. Scarcely, however, had she left the vessel when the wind, which had been constantly veering about, like the heart of a lady with many admirers, suddenly shifted to the south-west, and blew with redoubled violence, driving the whole force of the sea directly against that side of the Bill. As the cutter was

now on a dangerous lee-shore, she was obliged to let draw her foresail, and to stand off to a greater distance. The boat had meantime been driven some way, so that it was as difficult for her to get back to the vessel as it was dangerous to proceed. On, therefore, she came, to a spot some little way to the south of where Jessie was standing, but when she got near it the people in her evidently did not like the looks of the heavy surf breaking on it, and accordingly pulled off again and continued along the line of the beach, looking out for a more secure place to effect a landing. This even was a work of some danger, as the boat was thus brought broadside on to the sea, and whenever a larger wave than usual came, her head was turned to it, to prevent her from being capsized. The men in her exerted themselves to the utmost to urge on the boat, for every instant the wind and sea were increasing, as was the danger of their position.

Jessie watched the boat with much anxiety, for she was well aware of the risk her crew were running, and she felt for them as a right-minded tender-hearted woman feels for her fellow-creatures, though their faces may be unknown. Now the boat was in the trough of the sea and completely hid from view, now on the top of a wave, and seemingly about to be hurled over and over on the beach, and often as she watched it she fancied that the fate of all on board must be sealed, so long was it concealed from her view. Dark clouds rose from the south-west and drove towards Portland; the rain again commenced, and the sea-spray flew over her, but she could not tear herself from the spot, and she dared not quit it to call for assistance, lest in the mean time the boat might be upset. Her dog stood by her side uttering every now and then a loud bark, and by his agitated movements appearing to enter fully into her feelings. At last, either in their hurry to get on the crew were less cautious, or a wave came higher than any preceding ones, and she saw the boat rise suddenly to the foaming crest of a wave, and then, before there was time to pull round her head to meet the one which followed, she was turned over and over and hurled on the shore. The crew in vain endeavoured to grasp at the oars to save themselves from sinking, and, though the surge swept them onward, it again drew them back amid the boiling surf.

Jessie uttered a cry of horror as the catastrophe occurred, for, though she had been expecting every instant to witness it, she had yet hoped they might escape. Before her were seven human beings struggling for existence in the waves, and she had no power to render them assistance. One after another disappeared from her sight, till one alone remained. He was a strong swimmer, and boldly he buffeted the waves, but his progress towards the shore was very slow. He might indeed have reached it sooner, but he had been nobly endeavouring to assist his comrades, and to two of them he had given spars which he had secured to support them, while he himself remained without any aid but his own arms. These exertions had much exhausted his strength. Still he nobly kept up the fearful struggle. As he came, to be hurled back again by the next receding wave, Jessie saw with grief that he could not much longer hold out. Once he nearly touched the ground, but before he could secure his hold he was hurried back again. Cruel seemed his fate, thus to be deprived of life within almost reach of land. Again he approached, but the strokes of his arms were every instant growing

weaker. Her dog looked up and whined, but did not advance. Jessie could no longer withstand the impulse which urged her to attempt his rescue. She rushed into the water, and stretched out her hand towards the drowning man, whom she now saw by his uniform to be an officer; but he was still far from her. The attempt was nearly fatal to herself, and she could with difficulty withstand the force of the wave which swept by her. It was the swimmer's last effort, and with an imploring look towards her, his arms refusing to support him, his head sank beneath the foam. Her dog comprehended her wishes—with a bound he flew past her, and, dashing into the water, seized the drowning man by the collar of his coat, and the next wave hurled them both together on the beach. Here the dog held fast the now unconscious seaman, to prevent the wave from carrying him again back, till Jessie could come to his assistance. She then, with a strength which she was unconscious of possessing, with the aid of her four-footed attendant, dragged him completely out of danger; then, exhausted by her exertions, she sank down by his side.

The waves roared loudly, the wind whistled, the spray and rain beat over her, but she cared not for them, for there was joy at her heart for having preserved a fellow-being, yet she burst into tears; she quickly recovered, for she felt that her task was not accomplished. Her first care was to loosen the stranger's neck-handkerchief, and to chafe his hands and temples. He breathed, but it was with difficulty, and for some minutes he remained unconscious. To her they seemed hours. At last he opened his eyes, and comprehended what had occurred. "'Twas an angel form I thought I saw beckoning me onward, and I was not mistaken," he muttered. This was said in sincere earnestness, not as a frivolous compliment; and she gave him credit for saying what he thought.

"Hush, hush!" she answered; "you must not attempt to speak yet, but you must husband all your strength to walk to the nearest cottage, where we can get assistance, for I cannot venture to leave you."

"Oh, I think I could walk were I to try," he replied; "but tell me, young lady, where are my boat's crew? What became of the poor fellows?"

"I cannot answer you, sir, at present," she replied, not wishing to shock him by telling him of their loss. "However, if you will support yourself on my shoulder and will try to walk, I will lead you where further assistance can be procured."

"I will try what I can do," he said, endeavouring to rise; but he found that, besides being weak from his exertions, he had injured his leg, probably from striking it against the side of the boat as she capsized.

After two or three ineffectual attempts, he was obliged to sit down again. As his strength returned and he collected his scattered senses, he remembered all that had occurred; and when he saw the heavy surges rolling in on the shore, he at once conjectured the fate of his men.

"My poor, poor fellows!" he muttered; "and I am the only one remaining of you all. May I feel thankful for the mercy shown me!"

Jessie, meantime, had been looking about for a stick to assist him, and she fortunately found the broken spreet of a boat's sail, which she brought him. He now again attempted with better success to raise himself, and with this as a crutch under one arm, and leaning on her shoulder, though

he pressed as lightly as he could, he was able at a slow pace to leave the beach. He was now all anxiety about his cutter, the shades of evening having come on and the clouds having gathered down so thickly that she was nowhere to be seen, nor could Jessie, whose attention had been wholly taken up in watching the boat, tell him what had become of her. He soon found that he could walk tolerably well with the assistance given him, and Jessie therefore determined to conduct him to her father's cottage, where she knew he would be much better taken care of than in a fisherman's cabin. Thus they went on, the young officer pouring forth expressions of gratitude into Jessie's ear, to which she not unwillingly listened, for it was pleasant to hear him speak whom she had rescued from death, while her dog showed his consciousness of having partaken in the deed by leaping and barking with joy. The stranger had, however, overtasked his strength, and he could but just reach Captain Dalling's porch when he sank down in a swoon. A room was immediately prepared for him, and he was put to bed, where he remained for many days suffering from a severe fever, and tended with the greatest care by Captain Dalling and his daughter.

It is not to be supposed that Jessie should fail to feel a deep interest in one whose life she had been instrumental in preserving, and the officer was certainly not ungrateful for the benefit she had bestowed on him. He saw her constantly, and had many opportunities of speaking to her, for his illness was severe and his recovery proportionably slow, and she attended on him whenever her father was from home or otherwise engaged. He, however, never spoke of love, or uttered an expression which might lead her to suppose that he felt more than the purest gratitude for all she had done for him. As soon as he had strength to write he sent off several letters to London and elsewhere, and when the weather moderated he begged Captain Dalling to despatch a messenger to Weymouth to discover what had become of his cutter. Some days passed before he gained tidings of her, when it was found that she had worked out of the bay, and, going round outside the Race of Portland, had at last reached Weymouth. He then, finding that some time must elapse before he could move, had sent her on to Portsmouth, in order to get some necessary repairs.

Thus did Lieutenant Hastings become an inmate of Captain Dalling's abode.

Chapter III.

Captain Dalling had become somewhat anxious at the length of time his daughter was absent from home, and when night came on and she did not appear he could no longer restrain his alarm. He had taken his hat and stick, and was in the porch on his way to search for her, when to his joy he distinguished her coming up the lane, through the gloom, accompanied by the stranger of whom we have before spoken.

"Thank Heaven she has come!" he ejaculated; "but it will never do to allow that man to meet the officer. Harm will come of it, I fear, if he does."

Jessie saw her father, and, running on, threw herself into his arms.

"I have been delayed, and have to thank Mr. Southgate for assisting me," she said. "But I will tell you all about it by-and-by. He wishes

to speak to you on business. Keep him in your room as long as possible, and I will try to persuade Mr. Hastings to retire to his chamber."

She had just time to whisper these words, and to enter the cottage, before the person she spoke of as Mr. Southgate came up, followed by the two men who carried Jessie's dog. At a sign from their chief they conveyed the dog into the kitchen, which was on one side of the entrance, and then proceeded down to the sea-shore.

"Good evening, Captain Dalling," said Mr. Southgate, as he reached the porch. "I've convoyed your little daughter safe from a fleet of pirates she met on her way home, and, faith! I was glad of her company, as I was coming to visit you myself. I have some matters of business to talk over with you."

Captain Dalling did not look as if he was pleased, but he answered quietly,

"Come in then to my study, where we can be alone, for I have a visitor in my sitting-room, and I suppose what you have to say is for my private ear."

"It is not for that of a stranger, at all events," answered the guest, "so I will follow you to your room; and afterwards, by your leave, I will join you at supper, for I'm sharp set, and must be on board again to-night. My craft is hove-to off here, I see."

"Yes, she stood in here nearly an hour ago, and in truth I expected you to land from her," said the captain.

As they were speaking they entered the study, where, after the door was closed, they seated themselves at the table.

"Oh, the *Daring* and I are seldom far from each other," observed the visitor, laughing; but on this occasion I had appointed a man to meet me at a spot we know of, and I was accordingly put on shore at the end of the Bill, when on my way here I fortunately heard Miss Dalling crying for help. I am sorry that I did not finish that scoundrel Sir James altogether, but, faith! I was thinking more of taking care of the young lady than of punishing him."

"She and I are most grateful to you," said the captain, after his visitor had given an account of the adventure. "But beware of Sir James; he will revenge himself on you for this day's work, depend on it."

"Oh, I care nothing for what such a thing as that can do to me," answered the guest. "But never mind him. I have a subject of more importance to talk about. Captain, we have been old acquaintances, and I have done you more than one good turn in our day; you must now do me one. I love your daughter, and I want you to use your influence with her to think better of me than she does at present."

The colour, at these words, left Captain Dalling's cheeks, and he pressed his lips together.

"I feared that you fancied her," he replied, after some moments' hesitation. "But you know that a father cannot control his daughter's affections, and if Jessie does not return your regard it is no fault of mine."

"Perhaps not, Dalling,—perhaps not," said the guest. "However, you can give me more frequent opportunities of winning her love, and your sanction to our marriage if I succeed. Her heart is free at all events, for she has seen no one to fall in love with—which is so much in my favour. Now, I have made up my mind to settle down into a sober,

steady character; and as I have laid by a good sum, I shall be able to support her like the lady she is."

"I dare say you would," said Dalling; "though a resolution is more easily made than kept, you know; and I tell you again that I will do everything you wish, but I will not interfere with my daughter's affections. Poor girl! I have injured her as it is, and I will not run the risk of making her unhappy for life."

"I don't want to make her unhappy. I hope that I shall make her very happy!" exclaimed the guest, stamping impatiently with his foot. "Must I remind you that I have it in my power to make her an orphan and a beggar too, glad to accept my assistance? You know me by this time. Take your choice, and I will follow my determination."

Dalling threw himself back in his chair, with his hands clasped tightly before him.

"I will speak to my daughter," at length he said, in a husky tone, which showed the struggle within. "I will abide by her determination; but it is folly to expect to hurry her feelings. Love is often of slow growth, you know; and if you would win her, you must have patience."

"I suppose I must, though it is not a quality I have much cultivated," said the guest. "But remember that you do not play me false—or——; however, I'll trust you; and now we'll in to supper, for my time is short."

Saying this, the stranger rose, and before Dalling had even time to stop him he was at the door of the parlour. As he entered the room, he started back on seeing the young officer at table.

"Lieutenant Hastings!" he exclaimed. "What brings you here?"

"Dory!" cried the officer; "the most daring smuggler in the Channel. How dare you show yourself before me?"

"As to that, Mr. Hastings, there is very little I dare not do," replied Dory, for he was no other than the celebrated free-trader. "But I knew not that you were here till I this moment set eyes on you; and now that we have met under the same roof, let us have a truce. I will trust to your taking no unfair advantage of me, should you have the means, which I don't suppose you have."

"If you are the person who has just rendered so essential a service to Miss Dalling, you shall receive no injury from me, as far as my duty will allow me," said the king's officer.

"Ah!" exclaimed Dory, starting up, and looking from Hastings to Jessie: and the look brought a blush into the young girl's cheek; "is it so?" and he filled to the brim a tumbler from a bottle of wine which stood on the table, and tossed it off. In a moment his agitation passed off. "Well, lieutenant," he continued, "I might be tempted, with the aid of a boat's crew I've got waiting for me, to ship you on board my cutter for a spell, but under this roof, however you came here, you are safe; so with Miss Jessie's leave we'll to supper, and say no more about it."

Hastings smiled at the cool impudence of the smuggler; Jessie looked alarmed and confused, for a secret she had thought hid within her own bosom, or rather which she had not confessed to herself, had just been mentioned, and, knowing the reputed desperate character of Dory, she was full of fears for the safety of Hastings. Captain Dalling was the most disconcerted. He had reckoned on Hastings and Dory not being

acquainted with each other's person ; and as the latter had said he would remain only a few minutes, he trusted that he would not betray himself, and that thus all explanations might be avoided. The supper, however, passed off more harmoniously than under these circumstances might have been expected. Dory laughed and talked incessantly, telling several stories of his adventures which it might have been supposed he would not have ventured to mention before a king's officer; but in those good old times the bold free-traders had neither respect for the government, the laws, nor for those who attempted to execute them.

It may not be here amiss to describe the bold smuggler, Captain Dory, or, as he was more familiarly called, Jack Dory, though his real name was Southgate, by which only he was known to Captain Dalling and his daughter. He was one of the most daring and successful free-traders of the day, and there was not a port on the northern coasts of France or Holland, or a spot on the shores of Dorsetshire, Hampshire, or Sussex, where he was not well known, and with which he was not intimately acquainted. He had for years past defied the revenue with impunity, till, grown bold by success, he had become, it was said, less cautious than formerly. He had persons in his pay in every direction ready to collect information and to warn him of danger; and there was not a place along the southern coast of England where he could not collect, at a moment's notice, almost a little army to obey him. Although outlawed, with a price on his head, he ventured in open day wherever he pleased, and so general was the belief in his means of escape, and so great the fear of his prowess, as he and his crew always went armed even on shore, that no one dared to molest him. Thus year after year Dory pursued his successful career; and, if he did not become a rich man, it was because he spent the money he easily gained with the free hand of a sailor. He had never married, though report whispered that there was not a port he frequented where he did not own at least one damsel's heart, yet that circumstance did not prevent his being equally well received in other places; indeed, like moths round a candle, the girls were rather the more inclined to risk singeing their pretty wings by flirting with him. The truth is, he was somewhat of a gay Lothario, and while he himself escaped unscathed he cared little for the mischief he committed. His time came, however, and from the moment he beheld Jessie Dalling he was an altered man. Thus the dashing smuggler, who cared not for king's officers, revenue laws, or maiden's affections, became himself the slave of the tender passion, and learned to hug the chains he had before despised.

Such was the man who now sat opposite to Hastings and Jessie Dalling. As he looked at them he felt that his chance of success was small, but he determined not to strike his flag. Hastings guessed, perhaps, something near the truth. Jessie had just before told him of Southgate's, or rather Dory's gallant behaviour, and he felt that he was himself, even then, somewhat in the outlaw's power did he choose to exercise it. Weak and unable to defend himself, there was nothing more easy than for Dory to bring up a few of his desperadoes, as he had hinted he could, and to carry him off as a hostage. Such things had been done before, and Hastings would have been a valuable prize. He determined, therefore, not to be outdone in generosity, and, therefore, in Dory's hearing he turned to Captain Dalling, and said,

"I have to offer you my thanks for your hospitality to a stranger far more than my words can express them. I must bid you farewell, for I

received notice that the *Scourge* was to sail from Portsmouth this morning at daybreak, so that she may be off here to-night or to-morrow morning, and I must not delay a moment in getting on board. I have no longer any excuse to prevent me from attending to my duty."

"Thank ye, Mr. Hastings," said Dory, on hearing this; "I take the hint, and shall remember that one good turn deserves another. I must be off. Good night, sir; good night, captain." He looked at Jessie in doubt. "Good night, Miss Jessie; you have a friend in me at all events." And, seizing his hat, he hurried out of the room, followed by Captain Dalling, who seemed anxious to say a word to him before he went away.

The party have all risen. When left alone Hastings took Jessie's hand, and she did not withdraw it.

"Jessie," he said, "you saved my life, and I felt gratitude, but from the first moment it was not unmixed with love. That love has ripened into the sincerest, the deepest affection which can animate the human heart. I must go now, but I will return the moment my duty will allow me, if you will accept my love, to claim you as my wife. Do you care for me, Jessie?"

The young girl's eyes spoke plainly to the lover's senses that his hopes were not vain, and with joy he pressed her unresistingly to his breast. The first moments enjoyed by lovers, when their affection is mutually confessed, are very sweet, and so Hastings and Jessie found them. Dalling was some time absent, and when he returned he was gloomy and out of spirits. Hastings, however, was unwilling to shorten the moments in which he could be with her he loved, and it was therefore late in the evening before the master of the house, who had been so lost in reflection as not to observe how the time sped, gave the signal for retiring. They had scarcely taken up their lamps when a loud knocking was heard at the door, and a voice inquired if Lieutenant Hastings was there. The person, on being admitted, proved to be a midshipman of the *Scourge*, who had been sent on shore to report her arrival.

"There was so light a wind that we could scarcely get in, sir," he observed; "and as we got round the Bill a thick fog came on, and we could scarcely make out this place. When we stood in we fancied that we saw a vessel hove-to off here, but we afterwards lost sight of her, and just now a boat hailed us, and told us that you had sent to order us to anchor, and that you would not want the boat till to-morrow at eight o'clock. Mr. Billins accordingly, sir, brought the vessel up, as the weather promises fine, but to make certain sent me on shore to see you in case of a mistake."

"A trick of Dory's to gain time," exclaimed Hastings; "but we will be after him. You did right to come for me at all events. I will go on board at once. Captain Dalling, I must say a hurried farewell. Miss Dalling——"

He took her hand, and whatever he said was not audible; but his looks spoke far more than his words; and had not the midshipman been busily engaged in attacking a cold leg of chicken at the instigation of Captain Dalling, he might have discovered his commander's secret. Hastings then hurried off his subordinate, and, attended by two of his men, who came to assist him, proceeded down to the boat. As he left the house he exclaimed, "Now then, my men, let us put our best feet foremost, and we have a fair chance of catching the famous Jack Dory."

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

By the Rev. James Bandinel.

Chapter IV.

THE BIRTHDAY.

It was a noble entertainment that which King Alured determined to give in honour of his only daughter's entrance into life. It was to last nine days.

The first, the real birthday, was to commence with a religious ceremony, succeeded, after an interval of some hours, by a luncheon, or, as it was called in those times, "the noonday meal." This concluded, there was to be a ball; the day being finished off by a supper.

The second, third, and fourth days were to be occupied in hunting; the fifth was to be a ball again; the sixth, being Sunday, was to be duly observed; for Eberhard, the grandfather of Alured, who was ninth in descent from the great Arminius, whilst a hostage at the court of Constantinople, had been won by the charms and converted by the eloquence of the Lady Theophila, the last scion of the ancient house of the Heraclidæ. Alured, therefore, had been brought up in the Christian faith, though most of his neighbours, and many of his subjects, still remained faithful to the worship of their ancestral demons.

The seventh day was to be devoted to fishing in the lakes and streams of the neighbourhood; the eighth to a tournament; and the ninth to a festival, more magnificent in every way than anything which had preceded it. After this the guests, unless especially invited to stay, were to depart to their several homes. They had come from every part of Europe and Afric where the Teutons were the ruling race; and there were strangers, too, from other lands—from the shores of the Ægæan and those of the Propontis, from the mountains of Wales and those of Iernè.

It will surprise many ladies of the present day to be told that, notwithstanding the dangers and fatigues of the Forest of Idruna, Alethè was dressed and at the head of her train by an hour before sunrise—but so it was. Leaning on her father's arm, she issued from the palace-gates, followed by all the beauty and chivalry of his subjects, and preceded at a short distance by a band of priests, bearing an immense silver cross, the gift of the reigning Constantinopolitan monarch. Slowly the procession moved onward, to the sound of solemn music, whilst a vast multitude fell to the rear, or accompanied it on either side, till they reached the appointed spot, a wide glade on the outskirts of the forest. There they all knelt, in deep and quiet devotion, until the moment of sunrise. Still and calm they were, but not altogether silent. For, softly and gently from that mighty concourse arose the heartfelt and scarcely uttered prayers which every one there present offered up for the beautiful

princess. But the most fervent prayers were those offered by Alethè herself: for hers was the purest and holiest heart there; and, to her, communion with Heaven was intercourse with home.

And now, as the sun in the fulness of his glory arose above the mountains, arrayed in more than usual splendour, as though he wished to pay his tribute of love and reverence to the lovely and noble princess, the worshippers stood up and poured forth, with one heart and one voice, a hymn of triumphant thanksgiving. The service proceeded with solemn and simple earnestness on the part both of priests and people, till, at the appointed time, the king led his daughter to the front of that mystic stone, which, once used as the altar of Woden, was now consecrated to the worship of Christ; and, giving a garland of golden oak-leaves and a massive wedge of gold to the bishop, knelt beside his child. Aelfric, for it was he, having placed both offerings on the altar, consecrated them by prayer, and then returned the wreath to Alured, who immediately placed it on his daughter's brow. The missionary bishop then pronounced a blessing on the head of the princess; the people ratified the ceremony by a loud "Amen!" and then, rising to their feet, shouted with one accord, "God save the Princess Alethè! Long live Alethè the Beautiful, heiress of Alured the Mighty!"

The princess now returned to the palace, and betook herself to her own apartments, where she spent some hours in thought and prayer before arraying herself for the festival at which she was to preside.

The subjects of Alured, and the greater part of his guests, were deeply impressed by the birthday service; but there were those amongst the latter who did not sympathise with it, who were still strongly attached to the false faith of their fathers, or at any rate unconverted to Christianity. Amongst those who remained as yet undecided on this vitally important point, was Sir Edred of Drontheim; and whilst Eustace entered into earnest conversation with his uncle Aelfric, the Northman wandered listlessly and moodily forth, revolving in his mind the claims of the contending systems which at that time divided the allegiance of the Western World. His ancestors on the one side had been for the most part ferocious Pagans; on the other, for the last hundred years, they had been fanatical Mohammedans, yet he had learned something of the new faith from Christian captives—he had mingled with Christian knights, both as friend and foe—he had been a guest too at the castles and courts of Christian barons and kings, and he had had many opportunities of making himself acquainted with Christian doctrines, and contemplating transcendent examples of Christian virtue. He came, however, to Arlstadt undecided—he would look, he would consider, there was time enough yet: the matter did not press. He wandered the whole of that morning, and he thought deeply; but the result of his thoughts was, that he would for the present content himself with wooing the Princess Alethè, for whom he had already conceived a violent passion, utterly unworthy of the holy being who was its object, and leave the religious question to a future day.

And what were the subjects treated of by Aelfric and Eustace? Many: for the uncle and nephew had not met for some time, owing to the missionary labours of the one, and the chivalrous adventures of the other; but amongst them all there was none which the younger of the two dwelt on so long, or recurred to so often, as the Princess Alethè.

Time, however, wore on; and the guests of all ages were summoned to the noonday meal. It was nothing as to quantity—a mere light collation for those days, consisting almost exclusively of birds and the smaller kinds of game. The largest dish there was a lamb roasted whole; the remainder was made up of hares, geese, turkeys, and other small fry, with rabbits, chickens, and ducks, by way of *entremêts.* It was, therefore, as I observed, a mere light collation; for the warriors of those days looked upon the denizens of the farmyard, the air, or the lake, in the same way that you do, gentle reader! refined, abstemious reader! on larks or becaficoes; or, if you be of less advanced age, we might, perhaps, venture to add sparrows. And why should we not say sparrows? The happiest days of our early life were those on which we had sparrow-pie for dinner. How we used to enjoy that day, as it came once a year, when we were allowed to dine at the cottage, after having watched our kind host pick off the little creatures that were to form our festival dish.

However, to our tale. The princess sat at the head of the board, her brows graced with the oaken chaplet, whose leaves were of gold, and its acorns of emerald; her beautiful figure clothed, but not concealed, by a simple white robe, confined by a rich girdle; her shoulders were covered by a shawl of rich green silk, lately arrived from the East, over which was thrown a scarf of netted silver, the knots being all concealed by garnets; around her neck was a necklace of magnificent pearls, from which hung a diamond cross, that had once been the property of her Grecian ancestress. But who, of all those present, looked at any of these ornaments when they could look at the Princess Alethè? None of the male guests, at any rate. There was, however, one ornament which did attract attention, and that was a beautiful *rose* which she wore in her bosom.

The meal was soon despatched; for the *provant,* though light in the extreme, was first-rate, so that it invited attack and offered no effectual resistance.

Seeing, therefore, that his guests had concluded their aërial repast, and were all eager for the coming ball, King Alured rose from his seat, and, giving his arm to the princess, led the way to the apartment destined to be the scene of the coming festivity. It was a large enclosure, formed by walling in and roofing with timber and green boughs an extensive piece of smooth, hard greensward. The walls were richly decorated with all the flowers of the season, and thickly stuck with torches of firwood, which were lighted as the sun went down; flowery festoons hung from the roof, supporting in the centre, high above the heads of the dancers, yet sufficiently far from the roof to avoid its taking fire, bundles of smaller torches, which acted as chandeliers. At the higher end of the room hung more than one magnificent lamp of Byzantine manufacture; in the corners stood four bronze statues, the spoils of Rome, when sacked by Alaric, holding in their hands large flambeaux. The length of the room was three times its breadth, and the entrance, situated at the lower end and occupying half the width, enabled the vast concourse assembled without to see all that went on within; so that the people danced to the same music with the court, though not under the same roof, and shared with them the beauty of the brilliant scene.

The ladies were, generally speaking, extremely handsome, especially those of the princess's train, whose bright eyes glanced with a thrilling delight at the thought of their first ball. Amongst them the beauty of Alice shone pre-eminent, yielding only to that of her unrivalled mistress. The dress of the fair Teutons, though the Greek minstrel deemed it barbaric in the extreme, displayed their faultless forms to the fullest advantage, without in the least degree violating the strictest modesty.

The king opened the ball with his daughter; Sir Reginald danced with her on the next occasion, but a difficulty arose as to who should lead her out then. Their prior arrival, and their services on the preceding day, placed Sir Edred and Sir Eustace above all other competitors; but the difficulty was to choose between them. Sir Edred claimed descent from Zernebock, Sir Eustace from Thor. Sir Edred had performed prodigies of valour, so had Sir Eustace; nor could the palm be easily assigned to either. They had, moreover, arrived at the same moment on the same day, and had shown equal zeal and courage in attempting to preserve the princess from the emissaries of Sir Hildebrand.

The king was much perplexed: at length a lucky thought struck him —a thought more likely to suggest itself to a parent than to his child, especially on such an occasion—he would settle the point by seniority. So, after he had explained his difficulty at full length, he demanded to know the ages of his two guests; and the result was, that Alethè found herself the partner of Sir Edred. She was decidedly disappointed. She would have preferred dancing with Sir Eustace. So you see, dear young ladies! that your loveliest ancestresses were afflicted with the same sorrows that fall to your lot: even the Princess Alethè could not obtain the partner she wished for the third dance, and that, too, on her own birthday. As the knight took her hand, with a bright smile on his countenance, his eye glanced passionately from her beautiful features, over her graceful form, till it rested on THE ROSE. Suddenly the whole expression of his face changed; his eye flashed; his brow became darkened; and after expressing his warm admiration for the flower, to which the lady merely replied, "Yes, it is very lovely,"—he asked her whence it came, and who had been so fortunate as to present it to her. The princess changed colour, and, for the first time in her life, felt unable to give a direct reply; whilst Rosabel's warning—"Beware of Sir Edred" —rang ominously in her ear.

"Is it not the same which your highness forbad me to gather in yonder wood?" said he, observing her confusion.

"No, certainly not," cried the princess; "at least, I should think not."

"But may I not ask from whom you received it? My honour is concerned, lady, if another has dared to seek your favour by presenting to you that which you refused at my hands." And he glanced fiercely round at the whole assembly, till his eye rested on Sir Eustace.

"Indeed, indeed, you are mistaken," exclaimed Alethè. "THE ROSE which has roused your curiosity was the gift of a *female friend*."

"Thank you, lady—thank you. I am quite satisfied. It is very beautiful."

And he gazed upon THE ROSE till all around him seemed lost, even the princess herself; whilst dark suspicions and fearful thoughts of

jealousy and vengeance fired the deep iris of his large stern eyes. For thus it is, that those very objects which, both in themselves and in their natural effects, are the most holy and the most beautiful, produce in the minds of the evil-disposed the very opposite results from those which they were formed to create: thus it is, that every good and fair gift has an equal capacity of good and of evil; so that the one may always be exactly measured by the other. Thus is it with wealth and power, and eloquence and reason, and fancy and wit, and youth and beauty: and thus was it with the gift of the Rose Queen. To those who gazed on it with pure minds and gentle hearts it kindled a glow of loving rapture, whilst in the unworthy it awakened the smouldering fires of that hell which already lay slumbering in their breasts.

The third dance, however, at last came to an end; and Sir Eustace, much to her relief, came forward immediately to claim Alethè's hand. "How I wished just now," said he, "that I were twenty years older." The princess said nothing, but she looked as if she thought things very well as they were, and the glancing eye and beaming cheek with which she listened to all that her partner said to her, did not escape Sir Edred as he scowled upon them from a distance. She would indeed have been hard, very hard, to please if she had not been satisfied with her present companion. A commanding form, at once powerful and graceful; a frank and noble expression of countenance; an eye though blue as the southern heaven was bright as the northern star; a voice rich, clear, deep, and eloquent even in its slightest tones; and a smile—oh! such a brilliant, open, chivalrous smile, full of gladness and glory!—all these made Sir Eustace at once the delight of old and young. Maidens intuitively admired and trusted him; and men acknowledged that for truth of heart and strength of arm he was without superior. He, too, remarked *the rose*, but how different was its influence on him to that which it had exerted over Sir Edred. It seemed actually to inspire him: and as he conversed with ease and grace and eloquence, each succeeding topic afforded him new occasions for expressing those high principles, and noble sentiments, and warm and generous feelings, which tinged every word and influenced every action of his life.

We must, however, leave the ball for the more weighty matter of the supper; merely observing that all present, with the single exception of the knight of Drontheim, enjoyed themselves extremely, especially the female attendants of the princess, who having been (as we before observed) selected on the very opposite principle from that applied to the knights, found no difficulty in obtaining the bravest, and handsomest, and most delightful partners. It would, however, be unfair to these fair girls, did we not mention that even in the midst of the exuberance of their own joy, and the attraction of their own charms, their eyes constantly followed their lovely mistress with pride and devotion. Above all, the Lady Alice watched her with especial attention, so that scarcely a look or a gesture escaped her.

But the supper! Ay, you are hungry after so much dancing, are you not, dear friend? We are; at least mentally: and so were the assembled guests, not mentally, more especially the ugly knights—these hideous heroes felt the most unmistakable symptoms of a good appetite; they were conscious of a craving of the stomach, a tickling of the throat,

a watering of the mouth, and an actually convulsive restlessness about the jaws.

At length the signal was given by the blowing of a roebuck's horn, and the gay assemblage, having formed once more in marching order, proceeded to the banquet-hall in the same manner in which they had entered the ball-room. But the banquet itself! The pen of the nineteenth century is unequal to portray its glories; the mind of the nineteenth century is unable to imagine them. The tables were arranged much after the plan of a college hall, and it just at this moment strikes us that there are other points of similarity between the two exhibitions. The high table was of course raised on a high dais—its burden was goodly to look upon. At the top was a baked urus, at the bottom a roasted elk, in the centre a brace of broiled wild boars, on one side was a leash of boiled sheep, on the other half-a-dozen fried fillets of veal. Before commencing the solids, dishes were handed round of a less important character, and the more impatient guests derived solace for the present and strength for the future by pitching into a fore-quarter of sucking pig, or some such trifle. Then to it they went, and did as much justice to their viands as the guardians of a poor-law union would to beefsteaks and porter, if they had been kept for eight-and-forty hours on "Paupers' Strengthening Diet."

All earthly joys are, however, transitory; even the suppers of our stalwart ancestors came to an end in time. In fact, had they not done so they would still be going on, which they are not; wherefore, &c., as Euclid hath it—Q. E. D. The supper, however, in this case was not of overlong duration, such not being the custom of Alured's court; and the solids having been despatched, and the fluids having gone round twice or thrice, Sir Reginald intimated to the princess that the six minstrels whom he had selected, out of about six score, were in attendance, and craved her audience. These six were to play before the princess in succession, and he who was by her accounted victor, was to have the high honour of celebrating the victor of the tournament, and to receive a golden harp and a bag of gold besants in further reward of his minstrelsy.

And now as their less honoured brethren, who had been playing and singing by relays during the luncheon, ball, and dinner, sat down in silence, the chosen six advanced up the hall and stood on the second step of the dais.

"It was passing strange," says the diary of the Lady Alice, "to see the different appearances of the minstrels, and the different manner in which they comported themselves. The noble and sturdy German, Arnold of the Brocken, wore an air of quiet ease and sure confidence, though his blue eye kindled as he drew near to our adorable mistress; the Northman, Folko of Sternfeld, scowled around on the company, and seemed to veil his glance rather by supernatural compulsion than in willing homage, when it met the soft eyes of the matchless princess. The Provençal, Orlando of Toulouse, had that mixture of conceit and courtesy which marks those who desire to please and are wont to do so. The Greek Acmæus of Mitylenè, as young and handsome as the Provençal, but more perfect in symmetry of form and feature, seemed rapt in some glorious poetic vision, which did not, however, hinder him from watching eagerly, but gracefully, the looks of the princess—for she was the substance of his vision. The Briton, Lleirwg, of Carnarvon, had a stern, wild air about

him, as though even the joyous festival around, and the peerless charms before him, could not make him forget that he stood amongst the enemies of his race, the kinsmen of those who had enslaved his country. The native of Iernè, Fingal of Tara, an old blind man, with a long white beard, stood leaning against his harp and watching with eager countenance all that passed; the quick changes of expression on his almost inspired face showing how deeply interested he felt in the approaching trial of skill.

The princess looked round upon the assembled minstrels, and with scarcely a moment's hesitation exclaimed,

"Father Fingal, I have heard many praises of thy minstrelsy, which they tell me is prized above all others in that green isle where the streams flow music, and the breezes murmur poetry. Father Fingal, do thou begin."

The king looked proudly pleased at his daughter's words, and added,

"The princess has well decided. Do thou begin."

The old man quaffed a cup of alimeth which was handed to him, and, after drawing his hand once or twice across his harp, sang as follows, in a voice the defects of which were amply made up for by the poetic fervour which breathed in every tone:

More than a hundred years have shed
Their wintry snows on Fingal's head,
Whilst each succeeding day has cast
Its shadow o'er the dreamy past,
And failing strength and clouded eye
Tell, clearly tell, that death is nigh.

Yet, till the tyrant's hand hath prest
Its iron weight on Fingal's breast,
Till hand have ceas'd to touch the string,
And heart to beat, and voice to sing,
Still shall his harp unfailing raise
Its sweetest strains in beauty's praise.

'Twas beauty first awoke my lyre,
Thrilling its chords with words of fire,
When in the glowing days of youth,
My heart all love, my soul all truth,
The dark-ey'd Nora rul'd my breast,
And Fingal felt that he was blest.

Alas! her wishes soar'd above
A minstrel's home—a subject's love,
She sought and gain'd an envied throne,
And Fingal wander'd forth alone,
Destin'd through life o'er earth to roam,
And never make one heart his home.

And should I, therefore, rebel prove,
Traitor to Beauty, foe to Love?—
No! Beauty is the minstrel's queen;
And Love, his lord, hath ever been;
And he who dares renounce *their* rule
I dub him recreant, knave, and fool.

Aye, even the woes, Love's liegemen feel,
Woes which nor change nor time can heal,
Are blessings which I would not give
For all for which the heartless live.
No! Let me still his empire prove,
And cease to live ere cease to love.

Lady! these eyes may never see
The charms all tongues ascribe to thee:
And well perchance; for could he gaze
Upon thy beauty's dazzling blaze,
Too much the light for eye or brain,
And the old man were blind again.

But Fingal's practis'd ear can tell
Enough to make his bosom swell,
For lovely are the lips, I trow,
From which such winning accents flow,
And bright the eyes whose beams are shed
In kindness on the hoary head.

We must take into consideration the old man's voice, manner, and appearance—the reverence which the Teutons of that age showed to the hoar head—and the intense devotion which all of the vast assembly then present felt towards the Princess Alethè, to account for the enthusiastic and at the same time reverential applause with which this song was welcomed, both within and without the banquet-hall. The old man raised to his lips the hand which the princess placed reverently in his as she left the banquet, attended by her female train, and would have probably fallen to the ground—for poets are excitable beings, and too much joy or too much sorrow are equally likely to upset them—had he not been supported by Arnold of the Brocken.

"Look, look!" cried one of the disappointed minstrels to his comrades; "did you ever see such a marvel—the rising and the setting sun in the same heaven?"

The poor poetaster knew not that genius can best appreciate genius—that envy belongs to those who are doubtful, not to those who are certain of their position—that the true poet welcomes a kindred soul with more than a brother's love—and that to reverence all that is deserving of reverence, to love all that is deserving of love, and to admire all that is worthy of admiration, is one of the inseparable tokens, the unalienable privileges of the true-born sons of song.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter VIII.

We left Bologna for Milan. As I followed Œthra into the carriage, she said, "I expected my sister Theonoe to join me here, and to accompany me on my journey, for we have some family affairs to arrange with the Marchioness of Ferrini, who is at present in Lombardy."

Ere we had proceeded far, my fair companion threw off all restraint, and talked to me with a familiarity exceeding that of a sister.

"I have now been married some years," said she, "and have had cause to lament that I should have been so much misled by passion as I was, at an age when love is but a childish impulse."

She sighed as she spoke, and looked at me with melting eyes.

"You surprise me," replied I; "when I saw you first at Siena, you were a child no longer, but in the beauty of early youth, and then, if my recollection does not fail me, you, for the first time, saw the Count of Marsino."

"You are right," said Œthra, "but I loved long before then; indeed," she playfully added, "my life, from infancy to the present hour, has been one scene of love."

"Pray narrate its incidents to me," replied I; "so charming a history, from such rosy lips, will wonderfully relieve our journey; and above all, begin by telling me whether I have any part in that continuous scene."

"I doubt not you have broken many a woman's heart," she rejoined.

One pang shot through my conscience at these words, a pang such as might have been caused at that moment by a glance from Giuditta's eyes; but it was rendered momentary by the caressing looks and movements of Œthra, which, resembling the manner of Giuditta, seemed, with a sort of magic, to heal all wounds hitherto inflicted, whether by love or hatred.

"Of one thing I am sure," remarked I; "it has never been your lot to love and yet remain unloved."

"Deem you so," answered the countess, thoughtfully; "at all events, I am not disappointed; my mind has long been reconciled to what has happened."

"Disappointed!" exclaimed I, with gallantry and feigned surprise.

"When a man marries young," answered she, "he grows indifferent to the beauty and virtue of a woman."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I, with renewed astonishment; "can such be possible?" But as I spoke I felt convinced that it was true, and experienced pity for the man who, by an untoward fate, should have been reduced to a like indifference. The idea, however, did not long operate on my mind; I felt more inclined to listen to my fair cousin than to muse.

"When I was but fifteen years old my mother died," pursued the fair one; "from my childhood to that time I had been the betrothed of a cavalier named D'Orsolo, and so precocious was my nature, I passed the

whole of this period of my life in a fever of love. Every word he addressed to me burned in my ears, his sentiments impressed me with an exalted notion of his wisdom, his deportment spoke eloquently to my heart of his manly character. He was some years my elder, and my inexperience led me to regard the self-confident manner which he had acquired during his varied intercourse with the world as betokening a superior mind. He had already mingled in all the pleasures of life, which gave him ease and grace; while I, whose joys had been imaginary, betrayed the ardour of youth in all my proceedings. Seeing how fondly I loved him, and not willing to wed me at my tender age, he did not scruple to absent himself for months together, and leave me surrounded with other admirers. I had no one to guide me; my father allowed his daughters to please themselves, while he passed his days among his farms, and his evenings in his study. It is now more than seven years since I saw you at the villa of Ferrini: the marchioness was as a mother to us, but her health was feeble, and she was unable to watch over our education. Well, the Count of Marsino made his appearance at Siena, and paid me all the attentions of a lover. My father, on hearing what was going on, wrote to the Cavalier D'Orsolo, to warn him of the risk he ran of losing me, and urging him to appear and secure me as his bride, lest the solicitations of another suitor should divert my affections from him. I was with my father in his closet while he wrote this letter; he showed it me. Abashed at its contents, and too young to form a judgment for myself, I gave a laughing assent to its dismissal. D'Orsolo came not, but, as if desirous to convince the world that I could accept no other than himself, wrote a mild reply, expressive of deep affection, and declining to complete our union at my early age. My father put the answer into my hands, and left me alone among his papers. I sat down, provoked at the coolness of my lover, and, determined to make him sensible of my anger, I addressed him with a profusion of reproaches, and then, amid streams of tears, the blots caused by which I failed not to explain, discarded him for ever. He saw his folly, and came, using every endeavour to turn me from my course; at first by mild persuasion, and next by passionate appeals. I should have yielded had not the Count of Marsino entered the house at the moment: rushing into the apartment, he fell on his knees, and implored me to listen to him alone. My situation was dreadful: in the greatest agony, I besought both to leave me. D'Orsolo stood unmoved, but pale and sad. Marsino manifested the deepest anguish, and shed tears while he deplored aloud my irresolution. My heart was with D'Orsolo; I secretly wished that he would draw his sword on his rival, for, after all that had transpired, I stood in need of proof that his affection was unaltered. He was too rational to commit his cause to violence; he gave no challenge; and seeing that I wavered between him and a rival, took leave of me, never to return. At first I was much hurt at this behaviour; but ere long Marsino had completely gained my heart, and from that time I could not bear him from my sight. The loss of one lover, instead of causing me grief, made me only fonder of the other."

By the time that Œthra had advanced thus far in her narrative, we found ourselves at Parma, where the driver stopped for fresh horses. We were about to proceed, when an aged priest, who stood at the door of a church close at hand, warned us to seek immediate shelter, while he pointed his tremulous finger above. He told us that a hurricane was at

hand; such a one as he had twice witnessed during the ninety years he had lived. He did not wait to observe the influence of his advice over our movements, but tottered into the church; the office of old age being to advise, and not to watch.

We resolved to go on; for, although the day was more sultry than usual, we saw no threatenings of change; but we had not long passed the gates when it became as dark as night. Alarmed at the sudden gloom, we entered a podere on the roadside, and sought refuge. The worthy inmates of the house conducted us to their best room, and sent men to take charge of our horses. All was breathless haste. Thunder and lightning commenced in the ordinary manner; but the reports and flashes increased rapidly, until at last there was scarcely a perceptible interval between them, the heavens becoming one illuminated mass. This awful phenomena lasted two hours, when suddenly the wind rushed down from the Alpine and Apennine ranges, prostrating everything that lay in its course. In the fields, sheep and cattle were flung down and held flat upon their sides by the floods of this air-ocean, while peasants clung to bending trees to escape being hurried away. Waggons lay scattered along the public way, and the trees on the roadside were prostrated. When the storm had raged in this manner for about half an hour, the same calm as had preceded the hurricane was restored.

Œthra seemed much alarmed. When the thunder began to bellow, she clasped her hands together, and paced the apartment; when the lightning flashed, she started. I placed her on a couch in the corner of the room, and stood over her trembling frame. Then, at every peal and flash, she threw herself into my arms, and pathetically implored my forgiveness. I held her soft warm hand; and she pressed mine continually, in token of her terror. So passed the time until the storm was over, when she was unwilling to believe that there was no further danger. I ordered the carriages, and we recommenced our journey, but it was impossible to advance, for the road was covered with trees which the storm had uprooted and scattered round. We then decided on returning to Parma for the night. The countess sat close at my side. I felt her limbs trembling, and passed my arm round her, encouraging her with a gentle pressure, and exhorting her not to fear. She softly extricated herself, and with a sweet smile assured me that she was better.

The day was far advanced when we arrived at our hotel. Dinner was served, and we sat down to the repast. I inquired respecting the amusements of Parma, and was told that the performance of a new drama was in contemplation, and that hundreds were expected to be present. Time seemed to weigh heavily on my heart, in spite of the fascinating ways of the countess, and alas! of her too seductive arts. I sallied forth in disgust, and perambulated the streets amidst reflections which invited melancholy to preside over the counsels of reason. I thought of my frivolity in sacrificing my soul to a woman whom I could never love; and she the sister of Giuditta; nor was it long ere I abhorred my want of principle in having submitted to her allurements.

I passed before a church; I looked up at an obscure lamp which glimmered over the doors. The miserable beams flickered across an inscription, the letters of which seemed worn out by age; but it was legible to the sinner's eye, for it offered him plenary indulgence. It was the church where I had seen the priest who warned me not to proceed beyond

the city. I read the "Indulgenza plenaria" with a beating heart; the words were well known to me; they were inscribed on every temple in the land; but I had not observed them in latter years, and when I saw them last, I little needed, and cared less, for pardon. Years of suffering had now softened my heart, and the spirit which once held religious comfort in contempt was broken down, and needed rest. I entered the church, not with a saving faith in human forgiveness, but because indulgence there was offered. It was better to accept it than to nourish defiance; there it was, and there it had been vended for ages. The day still lingered outside, but twilight had entered the holy edifice. I advanced towards the altar, and was met by the priest who had addressed me on that morning. He did not recognise me, but demanded my object in thus entering his sanctuary. I gave him a purse of gold, and said that I was a stranger; that I came to confess my crimes, and seek forgiveness; on hearing which he led me aside, and perambulated the vast and dismal structure with me in conversation. I told him the history of my life, dwelt especially on my alliance with Melissa; on Giuditta's sufferings for my sake; on the events of Orazio's death; and, finally, I made allusion to Œthra, and revealed all. He gave me back my purse, and led me to the confessional. There, when I had answered many questions, he assured me of a full pardon, in consideration of my sad but artless statements: such sincere outpourings of conscience the church approved. The reverend old man commanded me to kneel before the altar; and having obeyed him, he stood over me, and in a firm, harmonious, and solemn voice, said:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of His most holy passion.

"And I, by His authority, that of His blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and the most holy Pope, granted and permitted to me in these parts, do absolve thee.

"First, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred; then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be; and even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and as far as the keys of the holy church extend.

"I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account, and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism; so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delights shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Chapter IX.

The imposing form of absolution affected me powerfully: if I had doubted its efficacy beforehand, it was because the light of experience had not reached my spirit. The act of confession dissipated the gloom which had surrounded me; the remission of my sins by the holy and passionless old man gave elasticity to my conscience, and peace to my heart. If we offend a beloved mother, we become unhappy; when we

are again reconciled to her, and receive her pardon, with what joy do we go forth into the world! I felt as if I were forgiven; and as I retraced my steps through the silent street my mind teemed with resolutions to amend my ways. Having regained my inn, in which I intended to pass my evening in solitude, a servant accosted me, with a message from the Countess of Marsino, stating that she had proceeded to the theatre, where she should expect me to join her. The hours I had spent in penitence had ran rapidly by; evening was far advanced; I had probably offended Œthra by my delay—ought I to increase her annoyance by further absence? Without reflecting more, I went to the theatre, and, as a substitute for better feelings, thought that I might preserve my mind as pure in the presence of the world as in the solitude of my chamber. To my surprise, the drama was my own—the first I had written; applause greeted my ears as, unknown to all present, I took my place at Œthra's side.

It was a classical drama; the actors were like colossal forms of marble, and spoke in the sculpture-breathing verse of passion. By degrees the sentiment rose, the tone of expression was more elevated, and the emotion of the spectators was vivid. At length the terror of the piece attained its highest pitch; the souls of the actors seemed to burst forth in naked strength, and to hurl themselves, with all their living force, into the midst of the assembly. All sat petrified, as if the bolt of the Thunderer had fallen terribly but harmlessly among the crowd; nor was a sound heard until the curtain had closed, when the applause began. As if the sense of poetic beauty were pleasing to witness, but painful to bear in recollection, the audience, which had been so attentive, reverted into a mob, and shouted out their remaining emotions of delight.

I walked out by the side of the Countess of Marsino, and shortly afterwards handed her into her carriage; but while performing this act of courtesy, I was startled by the fixed glance of Thanatos; he faced me, and made a sign to me to stay behind, which I disregarded, and followed the countess into her carriage. The appearance of my late secretary at the doors of the theatre, so unexpected, and the interview so brief, had somewhat of the terrors of a supernatural vision, and when I alighted my equanimity had not returned. On the steps of the inn stood the fiend, with as much coolness as if he had not moved himself, but by some black art had either metamorphosed the theatre into the hotel, or ridden upon the one, through mid-space, to settle on the site of the other. I assisted Œthra from the carriage, and leaving her to enter the house, stood face to face again with Thanatos.

"How have you liked the tragedy which I prepared for you and your new mistress, at Parma?" asked Thanatos.

In reply to this insolent address I drew a dagger, and holding it against his neck, commanded the intruder to leave me. My arm was no sooner raised, however, than it was held fast behind, by the grasp of some powerful hand.

Thanatos laughed, and, with furious gesture, exclaimed: "Thou wert too strong for me at home, but here will I deliver thee up into the power of the church; thy deeds shall meet their due punishment. Had not the hurricane placed thee in my hands, I had carefully arranged that thou shouldst pass the night in the dungeons of Parma. To complete my scheme, I caused the drama to be performed which thou hast this night

witnessed with such exultation. Thy pride has reached its highest limit, now comes thy degradation."

He ceased, and pointed to some officials of the Inquisition who stood near, and I was delivered into their custody.

The dignity of my mind maintained me in mournful silence until I reached the scene of my fresh confinement, which consisted of a vast and gloomy chamber. There I was left in utter and intolerable darkness, and this time my passion exploded in one of those terrible convulsions which ever preceded some dire act; or worse, the wandering of my reason, from its own to some distant sphere. I flung myself on the ground, and cursed those fates which had pronounced that life should be instead of death; that a universe should exist, and not a void; and, above all, that a divinity instead of silence should prevail.

"Thou Power!" exclaimed I, "who hadst the satisfaction to discover that thou alone didst occupy the regions of space; that the exercise of thy essence was creative; that thy conceptions were not more perfect than the works which they preceded; I acknowledge the wisdom of thy nature, and the eternal success of things. Thou canst not see, like man, through only a narrow way; thou canst not judge according to deceitful circumstance, but art in possession of the secret why things should be. What, though the angels have aspired to be thy equals; what, though ambitious man disregards thy law, and struggles with the fallen ones in a hopeless cause; can thy monarchy be subverted, or a commonwealth of souls conduct the government of nature? Thou art great alone, and the good only are truth-bearers around thy seat. In the fulfilment of my mission again cast into prison,—in my task of elaborating thought, and of enlarging the boundaries of the soul, enslaved, through the wickedness of the ungrateful,—how am I to bear up against this fresh trial, to pass through this new ordeal? If in times of old thou didst lead forth thy chosen to battle against the heathen, I implore thee now to deliver me from the power of man."

Almost before I had done speaking, the chamber in which I was shut up appeared in flames. The blaze rushed along the floor, clothed the walls and ceiling, then descended on a long table, and was stationary. In my first impulse I reverted to the words which I had uttered, but, ere I had time to reflect upon my speech, I saw three solemn figures in black seated at the table. Writing materials were at their command, and they attempted to grasp the pens and inscribe evidence on the parchments which were before them. But, to my horror, when they essayed to lift their hands, the flesh fell off them like gloves, and exposed the bones of the skeleton. They readjusted their skinny gauntlets, and opened their mouths for speech; but the lips fell from the naked jaws, like the loosened visor of a helmet.

At the head of the table there was a vacant throne, and while gazing at it, and wondering for what purpose it was there, my glance was fascinated by a countenance which gradually broke upon my view. The terrible eyes first evolved, and the other features in due order. When able to shift my gaze, I looked down, and saw the throne filled by a being appalling to witness. His eyes were like orbs of fire, which were dimmed by gazing with impious steadfastness on the Divine majesty; his brow was wrinkled, like the sides of a volcano, by memorable eruptions of the burning lava of passion, and looked like the rock which revolutions

had changed, only to confirm its power to endure. His stature seemed calculated to contend for ages against Heaven, and was a dominion in itself.

He prepared to address me, and I expected to be stunned by a sound loud as thunder; but his voice was sweet, and the expression of his face like that of nature at noonday, amid scenes of sublime desolation.

"Thou," said the malignant power, "art cited to answer for thy doings before this tribunal, which is appointed in these parts by the church below, to call the virtuous to account for their superabundant works of good. As inquisitors of that church, in which there is no dissent, its members working together unanimously for evil, we desire thee, as thou art a true sinner, to confess thy late heresy, and tell us of what thou art accused. Speak, and accuse thyself, or prepare for a fiery ordeal more terrible than thou hast yet had to undergo."

I knew to what heresy the arch-fiend referred—it was the absolution—and supposing myself at his mercy, at the same time feeling that my sins had brought me to this pass, I prepared to obey the infernal order, and, summoning presence of mind, I replied:

"Thou knowest all things; I confess and repent of all." I spoke, however, with mental reservation, at which the inquisitors laughed with such violence that their grisly scalps were displaced from their skulls.

"Dost thou not require plenary indulgence of us?" asked the president of the horrid council.

"I do," replied I, with a firm voice, still reserving the negative within my mind, in spite of what had just occurred.

As I spoke, the scene changed to a chapel, the president of the Inquisition was converted into a high pontiff, and his companions were transformed into priests. Mass was going on in solemn mockery of the Catholic Church, and a parody of the form of indulgence was repeated at the end of the service. I was somewhat awed, but ere long the blasphemy thus uttered by malignant powers against the Pope roused my senses from their sleep, and I dreamt of resistance. No sooner did the thought occur than it set my feelings in a blaze—a yet greater fire seemed to burn within me than had previously filled the apartment. It was the fire of hell, the weapon of the arch-fiend; I resolved to turn it against himself. I rose suddenly to my feet, and cried aloud, "O devil! whence this audacity, that thou shouldst venture to intermeddle in religious affairs? If thou wouldst establish a creed on earth, select thy own prophets, inspire them with thy will, through them make manifest to us thy power to dispose of where thou didst not establish, to destroy where thou didst not create, to render miserable where thou didst not make happy. In the name of my Master, I thus compel thee to evacuate this citadel of the faithful!" Trembling with terror I rushed at the fiend, but was arrested by an arm behind. The means, however, were sufficient to determine the event; for the council dissolved itself into air, and the fiend himself vanished as gradually as he had appeared, his fearful eyes being the last objects which receded from my vision.

The arm which had arrested me still held possession of my person, and the room was still lighted. I turned round and saw a man at my side bearing a lamp; he said that the inquisitors awaited me in the adjoining chamber. I regarded him with a wild stare, and his features brought to my remembrance that a moment before I had seen him enter. The light

which he bore, his death-like features, and his black habiliments, had hurried my mind off into the frightful vision which had agitated me, and which, at that time, I thought real.

I allowed myself to be led quietly to my trial, for no emotion of fear as to the result possessed me. I was supported by a firm hope, and a confidence which never long forsook me when in danger. I found my judges seated at a table, with solemn brows, one unbending purpose inscribed on their united aspect. There sat the aged priest who had that day granted me absolution, and three laymen were assembled with him. His face wore a kind expression, but this was the feature of age, and not of nature; the wreck of sternness surviving the extinction of human passion, though, on the olden site, religious thought had established the cold dominion of pity. It was a monument which commemorated the power of reason; which announced the final triumph of that severe faculty in its attempts to attain to the moral end of being. It was an expression which knew not sympathy with man's tears; it was unimpassioned, enduring, divine!

The next inquisitor appeared a man whose nature might confirm the philosopher in his belief that mind and matter are one. He was the hard-headed advocate who serves himself in others, obedient only to the force of circumstances and laws. He held within him no divine combinations; his conduct the effect of established facts, as much as the revolution of the earth on its axis. His instructions constituted his rule of life; had the day of judgment been at hand, and man been permitted to employ counsel in his defence against accusers, this man would with equal readiness have defended or opposed the prisoner.

The third was one of pallid feature and lofty brow, whose powers were of that order which ponders the universe in detail only, and never aims at those general truths which temporarily assuage man's thirst for knowledge. But their exercise had been diverted, ere fully developed, from their proper channel, to the investigation of heresy and schism. His conclusions were well poised and conscientious, for a function thus vile; and the tears which his scrutinies might cause to flow, and the agonies his sentences produced, were regularly inscribed on his memory as instances of how perverse is human nature!

The fourth belonged to the brutal sort, known to all save itself, which carries about the analysis of its character in the unaspiring forehead, the restless eye, and hardened lineaments. There wily hypocrisy lurked in the vain search after concealment; uneasy selfishness indicated by the shrinking look, moroseness by the straightened lip. The sole triumph of his art was to win the confidence of the artful, and to circumvent the villain.

These men had nothing in common but their robes of office, a bond of union which served to multiply the terror of their power. The moment I was commanded to confess my offence, and become my own accuser, I fixed my eye on the priest, and began to repeat the history of my life; but, ere I had proceeded far, he looked up in recognition, and told me that I had said enough. After a short deliberation, probably on the subject of my indulgence, my pardon was confirmed, and I was dismissed as having been already exempted by the church from all ecclesiastical censure.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chapter XX.

Father Eustace had been withdrawn for many months from Antwerp on business connected with his calling; and his first cares on his return were devoted to his young pupil, for his mind had been oppressed, during an absence of such unusual length, with the fear lest the influence of her uncle should have been too powerfully exerted. He soon discovered, however, that his apprehensions were groundless,—that worldly matters had weighed too heavily on her spirits to leave any room for religious controversy. They were alone, not only in the room, but in the house; some accident having called forth the few that house now contained. From earliest childhood Margaret had been accustomed, both in the confessional and in the intimacy of friendship, to pour into his ear every thought, every feeling of her innocent heart. He had been at times a severe monitor; yet she instinctively felt that he loved her with a parent's tenderness, and that in him she might trust implicitly with the confidence of a child; and secure now of having a good chance of an uninterrupted conference, she disburdened her bosom with more frankness than she would have done to any other person. Fresh anxieties now began to oppress the Prémontre's bosom, and his countenance fell as he listened to her recital.

"But, my child," he exclaimed, in the midst of her allocution, "why not go to England as your uncle proposed? It seems to me that no safer —no better plan could have been suggested. It is good that a tree be transplanted when its native soil kills it."

"My parents feared to take me among heretics."

"They are men and Christians like ourselves," urged the monk.

"Yes, but my mother dreaded the promise given to the Sturgeons years ago; in short, that I should marry a Protestant."

"And if you should? It were better to wed a good man, though of different creed, than a dishonourable one that loveth not God after one fashion or another. My child, the dreadful times in which we live make thought come home to us. I was tolerant before I left Antwerp, now I am just—another step nearer the Divine beneficence, which alone can distinguish between right and wrong—alone can judge. It is an awful thing to see the innocent and the just man perish that the bad may triumph in his iniquity; and that in the name of the Giver of all mercy. It is horrible! Look at me, Margaret; when I left this place my hair was yet dark."

He removed the cowl which had until that moment shaded his brow, and exposed to view the small rim of hair which the tonsure had respected, and which a short time before, untouched by years, had yet exhibited the rich brown tints of its natural colour. It had become in this short space of time, not grey, but absolutely white; as silvery as if he had already attained the last limits of human life.

"Surely, some great suffering has wrought this," said Margaret, gazing at him in astonishment.

"It is not what I have suffered, but what I have *seen*," said the priest, in a low choked voice. "It has done more—my heart is broken."

The last word seemed to escape from the very depth of his bosom, and to relieve it.

"Good God!" exclaimed Margaret, "you have then been forced to become a member of one of those dreadful committees?"

"Hush, my child," said the monk, in a low tone; "speak not thus rashly, you know not what. Walls have ears in this unhappy land!"

"Nay," said the young girl, whose whole frame quivered with emotion, "we are safe; we are alone; there is no one in the house besides ourselves. But it is dreadful—too dreadful to think of such things."

"Calm yourself, my child," said the priest, soothingly. "I shall not again leave Antwerp. I have obtained thus much, and shall now be ever at hand to guide—to advise you."

"Alas! father, why were you not here sooner? My fate is now irretrievably fixed; I fear that of uncle Paul, too; he has left us, and now, free from the restraints which consideration for our safety imposed upon him, he has thrown off all prudence."

"I have long thought it must come to this," said the priest, mournfully; "the cup is not yet full. What more? speak, my child, I am prepared."

"I—my father—I"—blushes dyed the maiden's pale cheek—"I am betrothed."

"To whom?" asked the priest, gravely. "If your choice be wise, this was advisedly done."

"My mother chose for me; she urged my father and myself,—for we were far from being inclined to decide so hastily. But she was so anxious, so unhappy about it."

"But his name, my child, his name?" demanded her interrogator, with more impatience of manner than was natural to him.

"Lo—pez Chi—e—vo—sa," she replied, dropping the syllables of that name one by one, as if the very uttering them were an effort, and that in so low a tone that the priest was obliged to bend forward to catch the sounds. As he listened his cheek grew even paler than before, until its hue became similar to that of his garment.

"My poor, poor child," he muttered, "is this definitely settled?"

"You would have found me a wife had I not resisted all persuasions, and remained firm in my resolve to await your return. None but you, I said, should bless my bridals."

"Alas! my child, these bridals must never take place. Do you—can you love this man? Come, Margaret, try not to revolve the matter over in your own mind—answer me spontaneously, and from your heart."

"I really cannot tell, father," said the young girl, whose cheeks, crimsoned with blushes, contrasted strongly with the ashy hue of her companion. "Sometimes I think I do, sometimes I think I do not. Mamma says she is certain I do, and that all girls are thus uncertain and wavering in their affections before marriage."

"No, Margaret, all girls are *not*," replied her monitor; "it is not fair to practise thus upon your youth and innocence. Your age ought to, and in better times would, have been an objection to any such plans.

Seventeen is a very tender age to contract a permanent engagement; but the anxiety of parents cannot thus calmly reckon years."

"I pleaded this," murmured Margaret, "but they would not listen to me."

"You would not have thus pleaded if—but proceed."

"Well, he makes very fine promises; he says he is more, and has more power than we are aware of."

"That is true," said the priest, in an impressive tone.

"He says that power shall be exerted to the uttermost to save me and mine from any peril that may ensue, should things turn out as badly as some people dread; that he will not even remove us from our home, but make it a place of safety to ourselves, of refuge to others; should it be needed—to uncle Paul. In short, he offers in exchange for the one poor boon which he so much desires, and has so long striven for, safety and peace to many."

"That is false!" exclaimed the priest, in the deep, loud tones of indignation. "That is false! he never will, nay, he never meant to do this."

"But you scarcely know him, father."

"Better, far better than you imagine, or than, perhaps, he thinks himself known by any one. There may be danger in breaking off from him, there may be sorrow—although I do not think so—but you *must* discard him, and for ever, not only from your heart, but from your house. This, my child, you must do at my bidding, and having the most perfect confidence in me, without requiring any explanation whatever."

"But, father," timidly replied the maiden.

"Margaret, you must become a woman in firmness of will, in decision of action, and remain the child no longer but in purity of thought, and blind trust in Providence: in all else be the woman. Your situation requires the speedy ripening of all your best energies. Surely you cannot hesitate to sacrifice all puerile considerations, nay, even grave ones, to this one, gravest of all. I tell you this Spaniard is a bad man—that his fair outside conceals a black and a tainted heart. Even as the snake boasts gaudy colours wherewith to please the eye, yet beareth about him a deadly poison, so has this unhappy youth misused the rare gifts that were given him for nobler purposes, until they have become dangerous to those who come in contact with him. The graces of his person, the subtlety of his mind, his acquirements of various kinds—all, all have been devoted to the service of the Evil One! He has no faith, no country, no family, no virtue, no love. Oh, Margaret! that I should have been led into the sin of saying so much evil of any man, however deserving he be of censure! But be warned; do not suffer the gay colours of the snake to blind you; suffer not his honeyed words to mislead you. Require no explanations, Margaret. I have, perhaps, said too much already; but abide by my counsel. At all risks break off from him—say you are too young, or if you have already said that in vain, that you insist on knowing who he is—anything in short."

"I might say, and with truth," replied Margaret, "that my uncle Paul opposes the match, and that I will not disoblige him."

"No," said the priest, quickly, "that would be very imprudent, very wrong. No; you must recur to one of those thousand pretexts which

woman's caprice may furnish. Can you suppose no preference? In self-defence—this is actually a case of self-defence—some prevarication may be permitted, when no other means remain."

"I know of no one," said Margaret, musingly; "I never saw any one. I certainly love uncle Paul, my father, yourself, much better than him, and, in maintaining a preference, I might think of you—it would be no deceit."

The pale, melancholy countenance of the monk was for a moment relieved by a faint smile, but so flitting that Margaret perceived it not, absorbed as was her whole attention by the subject on hand.

"If," said he, "you feel any embarrassment on that head, tell your mother what has passed between us—remind her, that, in years bygone, she entreated me, by all that was sacred, to watch over the welfare of her child. Tell him, too, this Spaniard, my fate is in higher hands—he cannot harm one hair of my head, unless it be permitted. He must not, however, remain in this house, nor shall he; and that is the main thing for you and yours, my child. This you will promise me?"

"I do," said Margaret in a firm voice, "but think not better of me for it than I deserve—it is no sacrifice. I already feel my mind relieved by this resolve, but the difficulties of putting it in practice."

"Shrink not before them, daughter. Endeavour to persuade your parents to fly while yet there is time; I will speak to them myself. I have suffered much already; but to see *you* in peril—sacrificed, perhaps, as so many innocent have been, to the worst passions of your fellow-creatures! I am an old man, and I trust that may be spared me; but if God wills it otherwise, I do not know if I shall have strength to bear it."

"I will be strong in endurance, rather than do aught that can peril you and my uncle," said Margaret, whilst the priest bestowed on her his benediction.

As Father Eustace passed through the door of the house, he met Chievosa on the steps.

"Your blessing, father," said the young man, in tones so bland that consciousness brought a flush to the Premontré's cheek, but he instantly recovered his composure.

"You have it, my son; may you and all sinners see the error of your ways."

"Your looks imply that I should do so more than others, my reverend father," insisted the young man, still detaining the priest.

"All should equally endeavour to cleanse themselves of sin," replied the monk, evasively, and tried to pass. But still, the Spaniard interposed; and quitting the easy tone he had taken for one of haughty pleasantry, he said with affected carelessness—

"You have been shriving my fair bride, I suppose, good father?"

"Pray let me pass—I am in haste," said Father Eustace, whose natural disposition as much, perhaps, as his habits, inclined him to avoid open discussion.

"Nay, but," persisted Chievosa, "as you are to perform so important a part in——"

He was here interrupted to the monk's infinite relief by the return of Cornelius and his wife. A short greeting ensued; but the striking coolness on the part of the Van Meerens made it evident that Father Eustace stood no longer so high in their esteem as formerly. So great a change had been wrought in a few months in the person of Cornelius, that he

was scarcely to be recognised; the jovial, fat burgher had given place to a pale, emaciated, sour-looking man, whose eyes wandered restlessly from object to object. Dread had turned into a misanthrope one of the most joyous natures that had ever existed; and the monk, much as he himself had suffered under the effects of the times, could not have dreamed that so great an alteration could have been produced in so short a time: he knew not that fear, like any other passion, when indulged to excess, eats into the very heart and destroys both mind and body.

Scarcely had the monk departed, when Chievosa ascended to the room where Margaret was sitting, and advanced towards her with an assurance of manner, contrasting as much with that which he had for years observed towards her, as their relative positions were changed.

"Well, Margaret, is all settled with Father Eustace? When is the day?"

"I have always told you," answered Margaret, "that I would not be hurried. I have not troubled the good father on that head."

"It is useless to tell me that," said Chievosa, the expression of whose countenance was so changed that Margaret felt embarrassed as she gazed upon it. "I know you have; I met him just as he left you."

Not being aware how far the priest might have been communicative, Margaret scarcely knew how to act. She had hoped to have leisure to combine her thoughts and form her determination; this was denied her, and, unprepared as she was, she felt it impossible to decide whether it were better to declare the truth at once, or to defer the explanation until she could do so more calmly and deliberately.

Chievosa perceived her hesitation, and continued in a yet more peremptory tone: "I could not have believed Margaret—weak, silly, wavering, as I have ever thought your sex—that you whom for years I have been led to consider as a friend, who have lately permitted me a dearer, more important claim, could thus seek to practise upon me a poor paltry deceit! Fie upon it, Margaret; I had esteemed you more than others; but for once my boasted knowledge of mankind has led me into error. You would, then, be content, from the contemptible vanity inherent in your kind, to continue listening to the ardent professions of a love that you are determined in your secret heart to baffle!" Chievosa's voice was raised to a pitch never before heard by Margaret, and there was a withering expression on lip and brow she had not until now beheld. She gazed upon him in mute astonishment, when suddenly he changed his whole air, the contracted brows relaxed, the scornful lip was curled no more, an ardent, passionate expression lit up his dark eyes, and his voice resumed its musical tones as, taking her hand, he said, with an appearance of trust, "But no! This cannot be—I have wronged you—you are silent, Margaret,—my anger, my unjust suspicions, have not roused you—you are still as true, as faithful, as you are lovely. My Margaret would not have deceived me; she will suffer me still to regard her as my own—my bride."

But Margaret had heard enough. She had been astonished at his display of passion, and her own nature, far from giving way before the torrent, rose with an honest feeling of indignation against it. She had, as we have seen, merely accepted his proposals as an act of obedience towards her parents, and Chievosa had sufficiently understood the state of her feelings and the peculiarities of her character never to have ventured in his intercourse with her beyond the flowery, Spanish-romance style of

homage which he had originally adopted; and the verses of favourite rhymes had been the medium through which he had conveyed his personal admiration. This new and unaccustomed language offended alike her delicacy and pride.

"I have never deceived, nor will I deceive any one," she replied. "You appear to be under a strange mistake. My parents wished me to marry you, and I, unwilling to grieve them at the moment when other griefs oppressed them, consented to obey. They promised you my hand; they bade me give it. But if you appeal to my wishes, my feelings, I must at once own that they were never enlisted in your favour; and you know it; or, if you are acquainted with the world but half so well as you pretend, you should have known it. This is now over; your violence has opened my eyes. You will have the truth without any subterfuge? Hear it, then. I never can, never will be your wife! Never *dare*, henceforth, to think of me as such!"

Margaret spoke with energy. At first her utterance was rapid and unintelligible, as if in haste to say all that her anger suggested; but her few last words were spoken slowly and deliberately, as if she were willing to impress them strongly on the mind of her auditor. She would have passed from the room, but the Spaniard detained her by interposing himself between her and the door.

"No, Margaret," said he, "it was not your heart nor your will that dictated the words your lips have uttered. The vile insinuations of some hidden enemy have misled your judgment and blinded your reason. Listen not to accusations that the speaker dare not repeat to my face. I will make him repent, and think that the most miserable hour of his life in which he spoke them!" Concentrated rage flashed from his eye, and the blood settled in his usually clear, olive cheek.

Margaret was silent for a moment, and when she spoke it was with an air of girlish pique.

"Your detractors are, I am afraid, many; your admirers but few. Of the latter, be assured I am none."

"But you were until very lately," continued Chievosa, with a bitter smile. "And do you think I am at any trouble to guess whence comes the change? Women are easily led, especially by their father-confessors. Come, Margaret, it is useless to prevaricate with me; it were better, for your own sake, to own the truth at once. Father Eustace has poisoned your mind against me."

Margaret's open nature would have led her immediately to admit the charge, but she remembered the hint of the priest, that the Spaniard might seek revenge upon him who should come across his path. The manner of Chievosa, so different from what she had ever seen before, impressed her with a vague feeling of terror; and, to remove his suspicions, she determined upon a jesuitical explanation, which, by telling one part of the truth only, might direct the anger of her rejected suitor to herself. "For," thought she, with the trustfulness of her age and sex, "me he never will seek to harm." With apparent frankness, therefore, she replied,

"The good father is certainly, in some degree, the cause of my present views, by opening my eyes to a fact on which I had not previously reflected."

"May I ask what that important fact may be?" said Chievosa, with a sarcastic smile, which, far from veiling, as he imagined, his secret fury,

betrayed its real violence by the nervous quivering of his lips. Margaret regarded him steadily, and the slight embarrassment under which she laboured gave way as she replied,

"He made me aware that my preference for you was not sufficient to allow of my becoming your wife."

"I am curious to know how he expounded that text," sneered the Spaniard.

"Very simply; he asked me if there were none other whom I preferred to you? I then told him—named to him—in short, it was then he advised me not to give my hand without my heart."

"So—o!" exclaimed her lover, assuming a more sinister expression, "I cannot well imagine who may be my successful rival, unless it be Father Eustace himself."

The uncontaminated mind of the young girl could not wholly comprehend the meaning of Chievosa. She thought he was alluding to the impossibility of her having seen any besides himself, who could at all be remembered by her, and, with a smile, she replied,

"We once received many strangers within our doors, though they are now so dully closed. Among these might there not have been some traveller, whose tales of distant lands were pleasant to the ear? I do not say there was, but there might have been."

"Ha! my suspicions!—the so-called Arkel. I thought as much at the time; persuaded myself afterwards I had been mistaken; but when did a burgher's daughter ever close her eyes to the merits of a noble, be they never so slight."

So deep and universal a blush overspread the countenance of Margaret, and her eyes sought the ground in such confusion, that Chievosa became confirmed in the idea he had thus hastily expressed.

"But this is child's play," he continued; "you cannot prefer a being once seen to one whom you have treated with affection and confidence for years."

The young girl perceived that her lover would shortly turn from the indignant to the persuasive mood, and as she was less prepared to meet the latter than the former, she quickly interrupted him:

"This painful explanation has lasted an undue length. Your own delicacy will spare me its further prolongation, when I once more declare to you that, be my motives childish or not, my determination is irrevocably fixed. I will never be your wife."

"Nay, Margaret," said Chievosa, with a fresh burst of anger, "you *must*—you *shall*. Do you think that a girlish caprice, for which no rational reason can be given, can break a solemn promise, ratified by your parents? If you think so, you are mistaken. You are still more so if you think you can trifle with impunity with a man's feelings—with his honour. I have announced you to the world as my bride. Reflect, Margaret, how deep is the offence you mean to inflict on me; it were not well—it were not *wise* to act thus towards any man, least of all towards me. Remember! I give you fair warning!"

The anger of both parties had had a lull, but that of Chievosa called forth again the latent sparks of Margaret's indignation.

"I think you threaten me," said she, with a haughty grace that might well have become a countess's coronet; "spare yourself such vain ebullitions of wrath."

"Vain!" exclaimed the Spaniard, whose rage burst forth without

control, and made his bosom heave with its very violence. "And who are you who brave thus a Castilian noble, who insult even more by your looks than by your words?—the petty heiress of an old Flemish trader's insignificant savings!"

"The Signor Hidalgo, who has condescended to become my father's clerk," answered Margaret with a cold, contemptuous smile, "has, at least, given himself the trouble to ascertain the extent of my inheritance, or I have strangely mistaken the aim of his midnight eavesdropping at the door of my father's secret closet, that night when my prudent uncle removed *his* paltry savings from the noble Castilian's eye—and hand."

The sarcasm had scarce escaped her lips than Margaret wished it unspoken. She grew frightened at the storm she had raised, and fixed her eyes in astonishment on the almost livid face of the Spaniard, as he struggled for words to give his feelings utterance.

"Miserable girl!" he at last found breath to say, "so you dare to spy my actions, and interpret them after the vile conceits of your own mind; you dare revile me to my face, and call me, with a contemptuous sneer, your father's Spanish clerk! Oh! but I'll make you pay dearly for this!"

His excess of passion forced him to a pause.

"Let me pass," said Margaret, with a pale cheek and somewhat subdued accent. "Let us not discuss the matter further. We both forget all that we should remember: I, that you are the aggrieved party; you, that I am not an unprotected girl, whom every passing threat can intimidate. I possess many friends, thank God, both able and willing to protect me, who are as indifferent to your love as to your hatred. Do not force me, by any further aggression on your part, to have recourse to them for protection, and thus draw upon yourself their displeasure."

"Me!"

He laughed a loud but cheerless laugh, which sounded in her alarmed ear like that of a madman.

"And who are these friends who love me not?—Father Eustace—your uncle—that dreamy painter, William Kay?—Your father, perhaps. Trust not to such reeds for your support; for reeds assuredly you'll find them all, if you think to lean upon them in your struggle with me. Or, perchance, modest maiden, you'll fly to the scornful, unbearded youth you call Arkel, and solicit his support against your accepted bridegroom?"

"Rather will I fly to the end of the world—to any one—to every one, than yield to such a being as you have shown yourself this morning, as I have long had a secret mysterious dread of finding you!" As she spoke, the grey eye of Margaret was fixed, with a look so like that of her uncle on the Spaniard's countenance, that he involuntarily averted his own. "Now, indeed, all is over between us; we cannot, even, after such a scene, dwell under the same roof. Think not, henceforth, that anything you can say or do will move me from my resolution. The value of your honeyed words I *now* understand; your dark hints I care not for; my uncle, my confessor, are not my only friends; and had I none, I would still defy you whilst there was a Fleming in the land to judge between you and me! Now let me pass, I pray—I insist."

"No!" exclaimed Chievosa, who, by a strong effort, subdued the violence of his temper which, in one moment, had annihilated the edifice he had been so long and patiently raising. Suddenly sinking his angry

tones to their usual low and musical sweetness, and falling on one knee, he continued in a repentant, and yet passionate strain: "Depart not thus from me, adorable Margaret, most beautiful, most beloved! Leave me not in anger, light of my days, star of my nights! Forgive the wild outbreaking of a passion too strong for mastery—a passion your innocent heart can scarcely understand—but which I cannot, will not give up the hope that you may one day share. The blow with which you threatened me was too severe—my reason could with difficulty withstand it!"

But the mask had fallen, and it was worse than useless to attempt to replace it. So long as his passion had been openly, even violently, expressed, Margaret's own energy supported her; she could bear and even retort a defiance; but now a secret, undefined consciousness of the helplessness of woman, when opposed to the power of man's dissimulation, came over her; and, as she gazed on the suppliant youth, and marked his graceful attitude and fine form; as she listened to the words of exaggerated feeling and soothing flattery, conveyed in so sweet a voice, her thoughts involuntarily reverted to the warning so lately given by Father Eustace. The snake with its gaudy colours lay before her—its dark eye glittered upon its prey—its hissing was in her ear. A chill came over her heart; a slight, irrepressible shudder passed over her frame; impulse became stronger than reason, and, without uttering a word, she darted from the room like a frightened child.

Chapter XXI.

Chievosa remained, for an instant after Margaret's departure, rooted to the floor; but surprise gradually gave way to a fresh burst of anger. Even his fury had in it something of the picturesque. His contracted brows formed a straight dark line beneath his dusky forehead, on which arose one solitary vein, swollen to a frightful degree. His thin, almost transparent, nostrils were distended like those of the Arab horse. His lips quivered; but after a short fit of ungovernable rage, that vented itself in a few broken sentences in an under tone, and in an unknown language, he muttered audibly the word "*Fool*," in Spanish, and, indulging in a low, bitter laugh, hurried from the house.

For some time he hastily strode up and down the place before Our Lady's Church, without bestowing the slightest notice on surrounding objects. The tall, elegant, tapering spire of that beautiful edifice caught his eye repeatedly, without his being apparently conscious of its vicinity. His usually active mind was reduced to a state of temporary inertia, whilst he sought, by rapid motion, to calm the agitation within, and bring down his excited spirits to their ordinary level. But his attention was soon recalled to what was passing around him, by the extraordinary animation that prevailed in the square.

Groups were forming here and there, and people stood on the steps of their houses to question the passers-by, whose numbers augmented every instant. At first, however, the greater portion of the crowd seemed half unconscious of the motive for their assembling, and undecided what course to pursue: some ran up one street, some another, then retraced their steps, with the uncertainty of those whose object is not fixed. Questioning and recounting on all sides; men of all ranks and classes, hurrying to and fro, now filled the place; and when, at length, the whole body, influenced by some general impulse, began to move forward, Chievosa, no longer an

unconcerned spectator, hastened to mingle with the crowd and follow whithersoever it might lead.

He soon found himself hemmed in immediately opposite to the Groote Gasthuys, the principal inn of the town, at which strangers of distinction generally alighted. That some of this kind were now its inmates, and objects of public curiosity, became a matter of certainty to Chievosa, when he marked the sudden halt of the people in front of this hostelry, and observed the direction of all eyes which were raised to the principal windows, although they were still closed. There was, besides, further evidence of the fact, in the many richly-caparisoned horses led by no less well-arrayed grooms, as well as in the many cavaliers loitering about in front of the inn, which evidently could not offer adequate accommodation to such numbers. Chievosa, upon observing this, determined to abide patiently until such time as he should find an opportunity whereby he might satisfy his now awakened curiosity.

He had not to remain long in expectation. The people by this time were closely wedged together by thousands, and formed in the square, and the streets leading to it, a dark mass so dense, that to penetrate it would have been impossible. They became, at length, so clamorous, that a few casements were thrown open at the first floor, and several gentlemen presented themselves to view. The multitude no sooner caught sight of the open windows than they grew more loud and impatient, and it was easy to perceive, from the occasional inclination of their persons, that the cavaliers were reporting what passed below to those within the chamber. After the lapse of a short time, a personage, more striking than the rest, came forward; apparently he had just risen from table, for a goblet filled with wine was in his hand. In this individual, Chievosa had no difficulty in recognising Count Brederode, the chief of the confederates; and among the other gentlemen there assembled, many of the same party, a certain portion only of which had adjourned to Antwerp, whilst the Counts of Cuylemberg and Berghen had proceeded with another division to Gueldres; some had been left in Brussels, to watch the movements of the Duchess of Parma; in short, they had spread all over the provinces to gather new strength, by making their association and its object more generally known. Chievosa watched with great interest this, Brederode's first, visit in his new character to Antwerp.

When the acclamations which greeted his appearance had somewhat subsided, Brederode, unbonneting to the people, raised the hand in which he held the goblet, as if about to address them. This slight movement commanded general attention; instantaneously silence reigned throughout, and Brederode exclaimed in loud, clear tones,

"Here I am, gentlemen, ready to devote life and lands to deliver you from the tyranny of the Inquisition and the edicts. If you are willing to join with me in so great an achievement, take courage; and let those who sympathise with me, and chose me for their leader in this common cause, raise their hands, and allow me to quaff this goblet to their healths." And Brederode held the cup to his lips and drained the contents.

These words were received with tumultuous applause. Nothing could be seen for a few minutes but hands waving in air, and barrets flying in all directions. The warm and general sympathy of the crowd appeared by these demonstrations past all doubt; and Brederode was obliged to show himself again and again at the window, though he spoke no more.

His name was shouted, and his presence greeted with an enthusiasm that passed all bounds—in short, he was the idol of the hour.

Chievosa's keen eye wandered through the multitude, lighting here and there on some familiar face, when suddenly his attention became arrested by one of the dismounted cavaliers, whom we have described in a somewhat disconsolate predicament before the inn-door. Until then his features and person had escaped his notice, as might well have been the case, seeing that he did not appear over eager to display either to the gaze of the curious. Scarcely had Chievosa satisfied himself as to the identity of this person, who was no other than our friend Arkel, when he espied his *quondam* patron, Paul Van Meeren, forcing his way through the press, in the direction where that young nobleman stood, as if anxious to get at him. He watched their meeting—it was cordial on both sides. He expected they would adjourn to some shelter, perhaps to Paul's own lodgings; but he was mistaken. They stationed themselves within the circle formed by the horses and grooms, where their animated colloquy could not be so easily overheard by prying curiosity. Chievosa could examine their proceedings at his own leisure; for as one party worked its way slowly out of the crowd, fresh idlers filled its place, so that he run no risk of being easily singled out from the rest. He observed Arkel force his way into the house, then return almost immediately to Paul, who quietly awaited him, accompanied by Lancelot de Brederode, whose fit of indignation seemed quite forgotten; for he was as kind to his young companion as he was courteous; nay, almost respectful, towards Paul.

All these shades of manner did not escape Chievosa. He saw the young son of Brederode lead the merchant and the cavalier into the hostelry with a show of ceremonious etiquette very different from his usual *brusque* and haughty bearing; nor did he leave his post of observation until he became assured by a glance upwards, at a happy moment for his purpose, that one and all of these personages were engaged in animated discourse with Count Henry of Brederode. The window of the chamber in which they stood was suddenly closed; but Chievosa, having now ascertained beyond all doubt the presence of Paul within, left the place as he best could, his passing fit of inquisitiveness being apparently over.

Not so that of another individual, who, for some time past, had been narrowly watching every turn of his countenance, unperceived by him, although just at his elbow. This was no less a person than worthy Master van Diest himself, who, the moment he had heard of a mob assembling near the Groote Gasthuys, had flown thither in all haste, shoved, pushed, fawned, and bullied himself through the crowd, until he had reached the most convenient spot whence he might view the whole scene. This had brought him under the lea of Chievosa.

Now, although Van Diest had always entertained great suspicions of the honesty and rectitude of Chievosa's character, yet it was rather a long-cherished and burning desire to penetrate the mystery in which the whole of his history and many of his actions were wrapt, than any particular mistrust of his designs on the present occasion, that made him regard the Spaniard as an object of greater curiosity and interest than even Brederode and the Gueux themselves, however engrossing they were to all besides. When, therefore, Lopez Chievosa, disengaging himself with some difficulty from the press, began to move slowly onwards, Van

Diest, well knowing that he should not be heeded—for he had enough sagacity to have long since perceived how insignificant he was in the eyes of the young Spaniard—determined on dogging his footsteps.

He followed, accordingly, whither the other unconsciously led, until he found himself at the gate of the town leading towards Brussels. Thus far, Van Diest's self-imposed task had been easy. Here, however, the place was comparatively lonely, and detection appeared infallible. But Van Diest's natural genius for prying into other people's concerns did not thus desert him at a pinch. If the road now became too open to conceal him from observation, it would, at the same time, afford him space, when stationary beneath the shadow side of the gate, to note carefully the Spaniard's further movements without exposing himself to discovery. There, accordingly, did the honest burgher ensconce himself, so that when Chievosa, having crossed the two small bridges over the fosses, stood in the open country, and looked anxiously around to ascertain if he were followed, Van Diest escaped his falcon glance. Well assured, as it seemed, of his being beyond the reach of observation, the young Spaniard now moved swiftly forward in the direction of a few straggling cottages, standing at no very great distance in the campine. Into one of these Van Diest observed him to enter. But here his spirit of investigation was sadly at fault; he could devise no expedient by which he might be enabled to pursue his discoveries further. He lingered yet, however, unwilling to depart without some more satisfactory conclusion, when he caught sight of that which added not a little to his curiosity. From the position which he occupied, he commanded a view of the country around, more especially towards the left, where the cottages were situated. He now distinguished plainly a man, in the garb of a common boor, leading from a mean-looking shed at the back of his premises a horse, quietly appointed, but whose proud air and noble form betrayed a rare and superior breed. The next instant a person, in whom, despite the large, dark riding-cloak in which he had carefully enveloped himself, and the slouched hat with which he had shaded his features, Van Diest had no difficulty in recognising Chievosa, issued from the cottage-door, and, casting another long, inquiring glance around, vaulted into the saddle with a grace and assurance that showed him no inexperienced disciple in the art of horsemanship. Managing the fiery animal with perfect ease and assurance, he started off at full gallop along the road to Brussels.

Van Diest had long lost sight of the object of his solicitude, and was yet pensively gazing on the placid scene around him; but it seemed that some particular star ruled the day, for that worthy, now that there was nothing more to absorb his visual and mental faculties, perceived that he, in turn, was exposed to the scrutiny, and even laughter, of the burgher guard who kept the gate. Van Diest, whose inherent good-humour never allowed anything to distress and annoy him, meditatively retraced his steps. He had much cause for thought, according to his own view of the case. Here was a secret, to unravel which he would stake—ay, the best, the weightiest gold chain he possessed, his gold brooch, and his many valuable medals to boot. Yet, how to effect this? The Spaniard was one of those men with whom, he instinctively felt, there was no trifling. If he communicated what he had seen to his neighbours, they would infallibly warn him not to meddle with the affairs of others, reproach him with having a prying disposition, and, in short, speak things

to him which, having been but too often repeated, he had not the slightest desire to hear again: he resolved, therefore, to keep his perplexities to himself. But they sadly oppressed him. He wandered, unlike himself, from street to street; his unmeaning, jocular countenance full of perturbation and thought; his goggling eyes fixed on the pavement, and, for the first time on record, passed half-a-dozen cronies without bestowing on them one look of recognition, or one word of greeting.

"'Tis passing strange," said one; "Van Diest must stand in some religious dilemma; nothing less could make him look so serious. Let's pass quickly, lest he recognise us. Jesu Maria! there is need in these days to keep all one's senses about one."

"St. Andrew!" exclaimed another, "he has not remarked my new cloak, trimmed with gold lace—he must be sore troubled."

But Van Diest was cogitating over what seemed to him an important design; and though predetermined to act upon the thought the moment it occurred to him, yet, like most of our reasoning race, he resolved to argue himself into the course he wished to pursue. "No"—such was the tenor of the thoughts that lent his brow its unaccustomed gravity—"no, it is not a puerile curiosity that prompts me to penetrate the secret of that man's life; but Margaret van Meeren is his promised bride, and I have loved the girl from her birth. Her father has been my friend from boyhood upwards; if there be anything wrong about the young man, it is a duty I owe both to him and to her to discover it—to warn them in time. Then if, as is the prevalent rumour just now, he be a grandee in disguise, what pleasure to be the first to confirm such a report! Besides, after all, what is a trip to Brussels? or, for that matter, to any town? Have I not, as well as every one else, gone a far greater distance to make my devotions at some particular altar?—joined certain processions of pilgrims, whose society I wished to enjoy? Have I not assisted at all the *fëtes* and distribution of prizes given in the different towns and provinces? Is not every inhabitant of this city a frequent wanderer on the high road for some motive of pleasure or profit? It was no later than last week that I rode over to Mechlin, to see the child that was said to have been born with two heads. Faith, the worst of it is, 'twas a false alarm; I could not find out the prodigy for all that I could do; and what was worse still, I saw many things by the way I had not bargained for. But, then, travellers must not be over nice, especially when there is an Inquisition in the country. In good sooth, I can see no harm, nor much difficulty, in visiting my good old gossip, *fraw* Van Raden, who has a snug little closet to give me, and good dinners—always something fresh. I get bloated on salt provisions; and here one gets little else half the year round. Then her lodging is in the street where are most of the hostelries; and I might meet this Chievosa in that neighbourhood. I really owe the poor, old, infirm creature a visit. Well, I don't care if I go to-day."

Thus summing up all his meditations, Van Diest's mind became relieved. His brow resumed its calm, unruffled expanse; his lip its usual sagacious smile; the whole man, in short, all his bustling importance; and, in less than two hours, mounted on a staid, large Flanders mare, who knew too well her master's humour to hurry forward beyond the most moderate of trots, he, too, was on his road to Brussels.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ORDEAL BY SWIMMING.

BOUND hand and foot in the painful posture before described, roughly and insolently handled on all sides, in peril of her life from the frightful ordeal to which she was about to be subjected, the miserable captive was borne along on the shoulders of Jem Device and Sparshot, her long, fine chestnut hair trailing upon the ground, her white shoulders exposed to the insolent gaze of the crowd, and her trim holiday attire torn to rags by the rough treatment she had experienced. Nance Redferne, it has been said, was a very comely young woman; but neither her beauty, her youth, nor her sex, had any effect upon the ferocious crowd, who were too much accustomed to such brutal and debasing exhibitions to feel anything but savage delight in the spectacle of a fellow-creature so scandalously treated and tormented, and the only excuse to be offered for their barbarity is the firm belief they entertained that they were dealing with a witch. And when even in our own day so many revolting scenes are enacted to gratify the brutal passions of the mob—while prize-fights are tolerated, and wretched animals goaded on to tear each other in pieces, it is not to be wondered at that in times of less enlightenment and refinement, greater cruelties should be practised. Indeed, it may be well to consider how far we have really advanced in civilisation since then; for until cruelty, whether to man or beast, be wholly banished from our sports, we cannot justly reproach our ancestors, or congratulate ourselves on our improvement.

Nance's cries of distress were only answered by jeers and renewed insults, and, wearied out at length, the poor creature ceased struggling and shrieking, the dogged resolution she had before exhibited again coming to her aid.

But her fortitude was to be yet more severely tested. Revealed by the disorder of her habiliments, and contrasting strongly with the extreme whiteness of her skin, a dun-coloured mole was discovered upon her breast. It was pointed out to Potts by Jem Device, who declared it to be a witch-mark, and the spot where her familiar drained her blood.

"This is one of the 'good helps' to the discovery of a witch pointed out by our sovereign lord the king," said the attorney, narrowly examining the spot. "'The one,' saith our wise prince, 'is the finding of their mark, and the trying the insensibleness thereof. The other is their fleeting on the water.' The water-ordeal will come presently, but the insensibility of the mark might be at once attested."

"Yeigh, that con soon be tried," cried Jem, with a savage laugh.

And taking a pin from his sleeve, the ruffian plunged it deeply into the poor creature's flesh. Nance winced, but she set her teeth hardly, and repressed the cry that must otherwise have been wrung from her.

"A clear witch!" cried Jem, drawing forth the pin; "not a drop o' blood flows, an hoo feels nowt!"

"Feel nowt?" rejoined Nance, between her ground teeth. "May ye ha a pang os sharp i' your cancart eart, ye villain."

After this barbarous test, the crowd, confirmed by it in their notions of Nan's guiltiness, hurried on, their numbers increasing as they proceeded along the main street of the village leading towards the river, all the villagers left at home rushing forth on hearing a witch was about to be swum; and when they came within a bow-shot of the stream, Sparshot called to Baggiley to lay hold of Nance, while he himself, accompanied by several of the crowd, ran over the bridge, the part he had to enact requiring him to be on the other side of the water.

Meantime, the main party turned down a little footpath protected by a gate on the left, which led between garden hedges to the grassy banks of the Calder, and in taking this course they passed by the cottage of Elizabeth Device. Hearing the shouts of the rabble, little Jennet, who had been in no very happy frame of mind since she had been brought home, came forth, and seeing her brother, called out to him, in her usual sharp tones, "What's the matter, Jem? Who han ye getten there?"

"A witch," replied Jem, gruffly. "Nance Redferne, Mother Chattox's granddaughter. Come an see her swum i' t' Calder."

Jennet readily complied, for her curiosity was aroused, and she shared in the family feelings of dislike to Mother Chattox and her descendants.

"Is this Nance Redferne?" she cried, keeping close to her brother. "Ey'm glad yo'n caught her at last. How dun ye find yersel, Nance?"

"Ill at ease, Jennet," replied Nance, with a bitter look; "boh it ill becomes ye to jeer me, lass, seein' yo're a born witch yoursel."

"Aha!" cried Potts, looking at the little girl. "So this is a born witch—eh, Nance?"

"A born an bred witch," rejoined Nance; "jist as her brother Jem here is a wizard. They're the granchilder o' Mother Demdike o' Pendle, the greatest witch i' these parts, an childer o' Bess Device, who's nah much better. Ask me to witness agen 'em, that's aw."

"Howd thy tongue, woman, or ey'n drown thee," muttered Jem, in a tone of deep menace.

"Ye canna, mon, if ey'm the witch ye ca' me," rejoined Nance. "Jennet's turn'll come os weel os mine, one o' these days. Mark my words."

"Efore that ey shan see ye burned, ye faggot," cried Jennet, almost fiercely.

"Ye'n getten the fiend's mark o' your sleeve," cried Nance. "Ey see it written i' letters ov blood."

"That's where our cat scratted me," replied Jennet, hiding her arm quickly.

"Good!—very good!" observed Potts, rubbing his hands. "'Who but witches can be proof against witches,' saith our sagacious sovereign. I shall make something of this girl. She seems a remarkably quick child—remarkably quick—ha, ha!"

By this time, the party having gained the broad flat mead through which the Calder flowed, took their way quickly towards its banks, the spot selected for the ordeal lying about fifty yards above the weir, where the current, ordinarily rapid, was checked by the dam, offering a smooth surface, with considerable depth of water. If soft natural beauties could have subdued the hearts of those engaged in this cruel and wicked experiment, never was scene better calculated for the purpose than that under contemplation. Through a lovely green valley meandered the Calder, now winding round some verdant knoll, now washing the base of lofty heights feathered with timber to their very summits, now lost amid thick woods and only discernible at intervals by a glimmer amongst the trees. Immediately in front of the assemblage rose Whalley Nab, its steep sides and brow partially covered with timber, with green patches in the uplands where sheep and cattle fed. Just below the spot where the crowd were collected, the stream, here of some width, passed over the weir, and swept in a foaming cascade over the huge stones supporting the dam, giving the rushing current the semblance and almost the beauty of a natural waterfall. Below this the stream ran brawling on in a wider but shallower channel, making pleasant music as it went, and leaving many dry beds of sand and gravel in the midst; while, a hundred yards lower down, it was crossed by the arches of the bridge. Further still, a row of tall cypresses lined the bank of the river, and screened that part of the abbey converted into a residence by the Asshetons; and after this came the ruins of the refectory, the cloisters, the dormitory, the conventual church, and other parts of the venerable structure overshadowed by noble lime trees and elms. Lovelier or more peaceful scene could not be imagined. The green meads, the bright clear stream, with its white foaming weir, the woody heights reflected in the glassy waters, the picturesque old bridge, and the dark grey ruins beyond it, all might have engaged the attention, and melted the heart. Then the hour, when evening was coming on, and when each beautiful object, deriving new beauty from the medium through which it was viewed, exercised a softening influence, and awakened kindly emotions. To most the scene was familiar, and therefore could have no charm of novelty. To Potts, however, it was altogether new; but he was susceptible of few gentle impressions, and neither the tender beauty of the evening, nor the wooing loveliness of the spot, awakened any responsive emotion in his breast. He was dead to everything except the ruthless experiment about to be made.

Almost at the same time that Jem Device and his party reached the near bank of the stream, the beadle and the others appeared on the opposite side. Little was said, but instant preparations were made for the ordeal. Two long coils of rope having been brought by Baggiley, one of them was made fast to the right arm of the victim, and the other to the left; and this done, Jem Device, shouting to Sparshot to look out, flung one coil of rope across the river, where it was caught with much

dexterity by the beadle. The assemblage then spread out on the bank, while Jem, taking the poor young woman in his arms, who neither spoke nor struggled, but held her breath tightly, approached the river.

"Dunna drown her, Jem," said Jennet, who had turned very pale.

"Be quiet, wench," rejoined Jem, gruffly.

And, without bestowing further attention upon her, he let down his burden carefully into the water; and this achieved, he called out to the beadle, who drew her slowly towards him, while Jem guided her with the other rope.

The crowd watched the experiment for a few moments in profound silence, but as the poor young woman, who had now reached the centre of the stream, still floated, being supported either by the tension of the cords or by her woollen apparel, a loud shout was raised that she could not sink, and was, therefore, an undeniable witch.

"Steady, lads, steady a moment," cried Potts, enchanted with the success of the experiment; "leave her where she is, that her buoyancy may be fully attested. You know, masters," he cried, with a loud voice, "the meaning of this water-ordeal. Our sovereign lord and master the king, in his wisdom, hath graciously vouchsafed to explain the matter thus: 'Water,' he saith, 'shall refuse to receive them (meaning witches, of course) in her bosom, that have shaken off their sacred water of baptism, and wilfully refused the benefit thereof.' It is manifest, you see, that this diabolical young woman hath renounced her baptism, for the water rejecteth her. *Non potest mergi*, as Pliny saith. She floats like a cork, or as if the clear water of the Calder had suddenly become like the slab, salt waves of the Dead Sea, in which nothing can sink. You behold the marvel with your own eyes, my masters."

"Ay, ay!" rejoined Baggiley and several others.

"Hoo be a witch fo' sartin," cried Jem Device. But as he spoke, chancing slightly to slacken the rope, the tension of which maintained the equilibrium of the body, the poor woman instantly sank.

A groan, as much of disappointment as sympathy, broke from the spectators, but none attempted to aid her; and on seeing her sink, Jem abandoned the rope altogether.

But assistance was at hand. Two persons rushed quickly and furiously to the spot. They were Richard and Nicholas Assheton. The iron bar had at length yielded to their efforts, and the first use they made of their freedom was to hurry to the river. A glance showed them what had occurred, and the younger Assheton, unhesitatingly plunging into the water, seized the rope dropped by Jem, and calling to the beadle to let go his hold, dragged forth the poor half-drowned young woman, and placed her on the bank, hewing asunder the cords that bound her hands and feet with his sword. But though still sensible, Nance was so much exhausted by the shock she had undergone, and her muscles were so severely strained by the painful and unnatural posture to which she had been compelled, that she was wholly unable to move. Her thumbs were blackened and swollen, and the cords had cut into the flesh, while blood trickled down from the puncture in her breast. Fixing a look of inexpressible gratitude upon her preserver, she made an effort to speak; but the exertion was too great; violent hysterical sobbing came on, and her senses soon after forsook her. Richard called loudly for assistance, and the sentiments of the most humane part of the crowd having undergone a

change since the failure of the ordeal, some females came forward, and took steps for her restoration. Sensibility having returned, a cloak was wrapped around her, and she was conveyed to a neighbouring cottage and put to bed, where her stiffened limbs were chafed, and warm drinks administered, and it began to be hoped that no serious consequences would ensue.

Meanwhile, a catastrophe had well-nigh occurred in another quarter. With eyes flashing with fury, Nicholas Assheton pushed aside the crowd, and made his way to the bank whereon Master Potts stood. Not liking his looks, the little attorney would have taken to his heels, but finding escape impossible, he called upon Baggiley to protect him. But he was instantly in the forcible gripe of the squire, who shouted, "I'll teach you, mongrel hound, to play tricks with gentlemen."

"Master Nicholas," cried the terrified and half-strangled attorney, "my very good sir, I entreat you to let me alone. This is a breach of the king's peace, sir. Assault and battery, under aggravated circumstances, and punishable with ignominious corporal penalties, besides fine and imprisonment, sir. I take you to witness the assault, Master Baggiley. I shall bring my ac—ac—ah—o—o—oh!"

"Then you shall have something to bring your ac—ac—action for, rascal," cried Nicholas. And seizing the attorney by the nape of the neck with one hand, and the hind wings of his doublet with the other, he cast him to a considerable distance into the river, where he fell with a tremendous splash.

"He is no wizard, at all events," laughed Nicholas, as Potts went down like a lump of lead.

But the attorney was not born to be drowned; at least, at this period of his career. On rising to the surface a few seconds after his immersion, he roared lustily for help, but would infallibly have been carried over the weir, if Jem Device had not flung him the rope now disengaged from Nance Redferne, and which he succeeded in catching. In this way he was dragged out; and as he crept up the bank, with the wet pouring from his apparel, which now clung tightly to his lathy limbs, he was greeted by the jeers of Nicholas.

"How like you the water-ordeal—eh, Master Attorney? No occasion for a second trial, I think. If Jem Device had known his own interest, he would have left you to fatten the Calder eels; but he will find it out in time."

"You will find it out too, Master Nicholas," rejoined Potts, clapping on his wet cap. "Take me to the Dragon, quickly, good fellow," he added, to Jem Device, "and I will recompense thee for thy pains, as well as for the service thou hast just rendered me. I shall have rheumatism in my joints, pains in my loins, and rheum in my head, oh dear—oh dear!"

"In which case you will not be able to pay Mother Demdike your purposed visit to-morrow," jeered Nicholas. "You forget you were to arrest her, and bring her before a magistrate."

"Thy arm, good fellow, thy arm!" said Potts, to Jem Device.

"To the fiend wi' thee," cried Jem, shaking him off roughly. "The squoire is reet. Wouldee had let thee drown."

"What, have you changed your mind already, Jem?" cried Nicholas,

in a taunting tone. "You'll have your grandmother's thanks for the service you've rendered her, lad—ha! ha!"

"Fo' t' matter o' two pins ey'd pitch him in again," growled Jem, eyeing the attorney askance.

"No, no, Jem," observed Nicholas; "things must take their course. What's done is done. But if Master Potts be wise, he'll take himself out of court without delay."

"You'll be glad to get me out of court one of these days, squire," muttered Potts, "and so will you too, Master James Device. A day of reckoning will come for both—heavy reckoning. Ugh! ugh!" he added, shivering, "how my teeth chatter!"

"Make what haste you can to the Dragon," cried the good-natured squire; "get your clothes dried, and bid John Lawe brew you a pottle of strong sack, swallow it scalding hot, and you'll never look behind you."

"Nor before me either," retorted Potts. "Scalding sack! This bloodthirsty squire has a new design upon my life!"

"Ey'n go wi' ye to t' Dragon, mester," said Baggiley; "lean o' me."

"Thankee, friend," replied Potts, taking his arm. "A word at parting, Master Nicholas. This is not the only discovery of witchcraft I've made. I've another case, somewhat nearer home. Ha! ha!"

With this, he hobbled off in the direction of the alehouse, his steps being traceable along the dusty road like the course of a watering-cart.

"Ey'n go efter him," growled Jem.

"No you won't, lad," rejoined Nicholas; "and if you'll take my advice, you'll get out of Whalley as fast as you can. You will be safer on the heath of Pendle than here, when Sir Ralph and Master Roger Nowell come to know what has taken place. And mind this, sirrah—the hounds will be out in the forest to-morrow. D'ye heed?"

Jem growled something in reply, and seizing his little sister's hand, strode off with her towards his mother's dwelling, uttering not a word by the way.

Having seen Nance Redferne conveyed to the cottage as before mentioned, Richard Assheton, regardless of the wet state of his own apparel, now joined his cousin, the squire, and they walked to the abbey together, conversing on what had taken place, while the crowd dispersed, some returning to the bowers in the churchyard, and others to the green, their merriment in nowise damped by the recent occurrences, which they looked upon as part of the day's sport. As some of them passed by, laughing, singing, and dancing, Richard Assheton remarked, "I can scarcely believe these to be the same people I so lately saw in the churchyard. They then seemed totally devoid of humanity."

"Pshaw! they are humane enough," rejoined Nicholas; "but you cannot expect them to show mercy to a witch, any more than to a wolf, or other savage and devouring beast."

"But the means taken to prove her guilt were as absurd as iniquitous," said Richard, "and savour of the barbarous ages. If she had perished, all concerned in the trial would have been guilty of murder."

"But no judge would condemn them," returned Nicholas; "and they have the highest authority in the realm to uphold them. As to leniency to witches, in a general way, I would show none. Traitors alike to God

and man, and bond slaves of Satan, they are out of the pale of Christian charity."

"No criminal, however great, is out of the pale of Christian charity," replied Richard; "but such scenes as we have just witnessed are a disgrace to humanity, and a mockery of justice. In seeking to discover and punish one offence a greater is committed. Suppose this poor young woman really guilty—what then? Our laws are made for protection, as well as punishment of wrong. She should be arraigned, convicted, and condemned before punishment."

"Our laws admit of torture, Richard," observed Nicholas.

"True," said the young man, with a shudder; "and it is another relic of a ruthless age. But torture is only allowed under the eye of the law, and can be inflicted by none but its sworn servants. But, supposing this poor young woman innocent of the crime imputed to her, which I really believe her to be, how, then, will you excuse the atrocities to which she has been subjected?"

"I do not believe her innocent," rejoined Nicholas; "her relationship to a notorious witch, and her fabrication of clay images, make her justly suspected."

"Then let her be examined by a magistrate," said Richard; "but, even then, woe betide her! When I think that Alizon Device is liable to the same atrocious treatment, in consequence of her relationship to Mother Demdike, I can scarce contain my indignation."

"It is unlucky for her, indeed," rejoined Nicholas; "but of all Nance's assailants the most infuriated was Alizon's brother, Jem Device."

"I saw it," cried Richard, an uneasy expression passing over his countenance. "Would she could be removed from that family!"

"To what purpose?" demanded Nicholas, quickly. "Her family are more likely to be removed from her if Master Potts stay in the neighbourhood."

"Poor girl!" exclaimed Richard.

And he fell into a reverie which was not broken till they reached the abbey.

To return to Jem Device. On reaching the cottage, the ruffian flung himself into a chair, and for a time seemed lost in reflection. At last he looked up, and said gruffly to Jennet, who stood watching him,

"See if mother be come whoam?"

"Eigh, eigh, ey'm here, Jem," said Elizabeth Device, opening the inner door and coming forth. "So ye ha been swimmin' Nance Redferne, lad, eh? Ey'm glad on it—ha! ha!"

Jem gave her a significant look, upon which she motioned Jennet to withdraw, and the injunction being complied with, though with evident reluctance, by the little girl, she closed the door upon her.

"Now, Jem, what hast got to say to me, lad, eh?" demanded Elizabeth, stepping up to him.

"Neaw great deal, mother," he replied; "boh ey keawnsel ye to look weel efter yersel. We're aw i' dawnger."

"Ey knoas it, lad, ey knoas it," replied Elizabeth; "boh fo' my own pert ey'm nah afeerd. They darna touch me; an if they dun, ey con defend mysel reet weel. Here's a letter to thy granmother," she added, giving him a sealed packet. "Tak care on it."

"Fro' Mistress Nutter, ey suppose?" asked Jem.

"Eigh, who else should it be from?" rejoined Elizabeth. "Your granmother win ha' enough to do to-neet, an so win yo, too, Jem, lettin' alone the walk fro' here to Malkin Tower."

"Weel, gi' me mey supper, an ey'n set out," rejoined Jem. "So ye ha' seen Mistress Nutter?"

"Ey found her i' t' abbey garden," replied Elizabeth, "an we had some tawk together abowt t' boundary line o' t' Rough Lee estates, an other matters."

And, as she spoke, she set a cold pasty, with oat cakes, cheese, and butter, before her son, and next proceeded to draw him a jug of ale.

"What other matters dun you mean, mother?" inquired Jem, attacking the pasty. "War it owt relatin' to that little Lunnon lawyer, Mester Potts?"

"Theawst hit it, Jem," replied Elizabeth, seating herself near him. "That Potts means to visit thy granmother to-morrow."

"Weel!" said Jem, grimly.

"An arrest her," pursued Elizabeth.

"Easily said," laughed Jem, scornfully, "boh neaw quite so easily done."

"Nah quite, Jem," responded Elizabeth, joining in the laugh. "'Specially when t' owd dame's prepared, as she win be now."

"Potts may set out o' that journey, boh he winna come back again," remarked Jem, in a sombre tone.

"Wait till yo'n seen your granmother efore ye do owt, lad," said Elizabeth.

"Ay, wait," added a voice.

"What's that?" demanded Jem, laying down his knife and fork.

Elizabeth did not answer in words, but her significant looks were quite response enough for her son.

"Os ye win, mother," he said, in an altered tone. After a pause, employed in eating, he added, "Did Mistress Nutter put onny questions to ye about Alizon?"

"More nor enough, lad," replied Elizabeth; "fo' what had ey to tell her? She praised her beauty, an said how unlike she wur to Jennet an thee, lad—ha! ha! An wondert how ey cum to ha such a dowter, an monny other things besoide. An what could ey say to it aw, except——"

"Except what, mother?" interrupted Jem.

"Except that she wur my child just os much os Jennet an thee!"

"Humph!" exclaimed Jem.

"Humph!" echoed the voice that had previously spoken.

Jem looked at his mother, and took a long pull at the ale-jug.

"Any more messages to Malkin Tower?" he asked, getting up.

"Neaw—mother will onderstond," replied Elizabeth. "Bid her be on her guard, fo' the enemy is abroad."

"Meanin' Potts?" said Jem.

"Meaning Potts," answered the voice.

"There are strange echoes here," said Jem, looking round suspiciously.

At this moment Tib came from under a piece of furniture, where he had apparently been lying, and rubbed himself familiarly against his legs.

"Ey needna be afeerd o' owt happenin' to ye, mother," said Jem, patting the cat's back. "Tib win tay care on yo."

"Eigh, eigh," replied Elizabeth, bending down to pat him, "he's a trusty cat." But the ill-tempered animal would not be propitiated, but erected his back and menaced her with his claws.

"Yo han offended him, mother," said Jem. "One word efore ey start. Are ye quite sure Potts didna owerhear your conversation wi' Mistress Nutter?"

"Why d'ye ask, Jem?" she replied.

"Fro' summat the knave threw out to Squoire Nicholas just now," rejoined Jem. "He said he'd another case o' witchcraft nearer whoam. Whot could he mean?"

"Whot indeed?" cried Elizabeth, quickly.

"Look at Tib!" exclaimed her son.

As he spoke, the cat sprang towards the inner door, and scratched violently against it.

Elizabeth immediately raised the latch and found Jennet behind it, with a face like scarlet.

"Yo'n been listenin', ye young eavesdropper," cried Elizabeth, boxing her ears soundly; "take that for your pains—an that."

"Touch me again, an Mester Potts shan knoa aw ey'n heerd," said the little girl, repressing her tears.

Elizabeth regarded her angrily; but the looks of the child were so spiteful, that she did not dare to strike her. She glanced too at Tib; but the uncertain cat was now rubbing himself in the most friendly manner against Jennet.

"Yo shan pay for this, lass, presently," said Elizabeth.

"Best nah provoke me, mother," rejoined Jennet, in a determined tone; "if ye dun, aw secrets shan out. Ey knoa why Jem's goin' to Malkin Tower to-neet—an why yo're afeerd o' Mester Potts."

"Howd thy tongue or ey'n choke thee, little pest," cried her mother, fiercely.

Jennet replied with a mocking laugh, while Tib rubbed against her more fondly than ever.

"Let her alone," interposed Jem. "An now ey mun be off. So, fare ye weel, mother—an yo, too, Jennet." And with this he put on his cap, seized his cudgel, and quitted the cottage.

AN ADVENTURE AT A VILLAGE INN.

BEING THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

Since the first appearance of the "Incidents of the Road," from several of our brotherhood I have received communications, accompanied by narrations of events which they respectively have encountered during their experiences, and which, with much reason, they consider equally worthy of being chronicled as my own. In selecting two of these narratives to present to the reader, I have been guided not so much by the novelty they possess, as by the reliance which, from a personal knowledge, I place on those from whom I have received them. Apart from this, however, in my opinion they both bear internal evidence of their truthfulness. The first, which is aptly entitled "An Adventure at a Village Inn," is given as by me received, with the exception of a few slight alterations not affecting the events described in the story.

Accompanied by a friend, in the autumn of 1844 I visited the ducal village of E——r, in the north of England, to enjoy a few days' grouse-shooting on its neighbouring hills. Our head-quarters were at the principal, or, rather, the only inn in the village, which, contrary to the general character of country inns, possesses some pretensions to style—even splendour. The building was erected expressly for the accommodation of the numerous visitors who, from all parts of the world, avail themselves of the privilege afforded of seeing, as well as the unequalled grounds the interior of the most splendid and world-wide renowned residence of one of the wealthiest of England's nobility. During the summer months the inn is generally crowded, but on our arrival, rather late in the autumn, the last of the migratories had departed, and we found ourselves the only guests of Jeffries, the very worthy host.

During our sojourn in the place, it was the privilege of myself and my friend to have the *entrée* of our host's sanctorum, where, with him and his amiable better half, and one or two of their private friends, including, amongst others, their neighbour, the duke's steward, we had enjoyed, in the evenings, many agreeable conversations, and as many pleasant quiet rubbers. On one of our visits to this snuggery, following the enjoyment of an excellent dinner, accompanied with that true and unpurchasable sauce which we had won on the hills, we learned from our hostess that her liege lord and husband had retired for the night, dead beat. He had been out with us during the day, and this retreat served to confirm the opinion he had himself more than once expressed whilst with us brushing the heather, that he was hardly in condition for the work. But although our host had been placed *hors de combat*, there sat our friend his grace's steward, not only a very intelligent and pleasant companion, but somewhat celebrated for his breed of short-horns and his knowledge in general of the animal world. Right glad were we to see him with his cheerful countenance hailing our coming, and, after a brief chat on the successful sport of the day, we sat down to our accustomed rubber. In cutting for partners, fortune awarded the lady to me, my friend and the steward

being our opponents; and knowing, from our prior encounters, that we were very equally matched, we anticipated a highly interesting game. And so it indeed proved. I will not, however, dwell longer on the preliminaries, but proceed to relate what may be termed the adventure of the night.

Rapidly had flown the hours; nine, ten, eleven, had come and gone. The neighbouring church clock, with its half-cracked chimes, had doled out its mournful ditty expressive of that mysterious hour, midnight. We were deeply intent upon our game; the fate of a *finesse* was about being decided. All eyes were upon the table, when the door, unheard, unseen by us, was quietly opened, and we were startled by a subdued, sibilant whisper of

"Missus! missus!"

The cards were involuntarily in each hand more firmly clenched as we turned our eyes in the direction from whence the voice proceeded, where, pale, very pale, holding the handle of the opened door, Jim the Boots revealed himself, with an expression of countenance as though he had seen a legion of spirits.

"Whatever is the matter?" softly, but eagerly, inquired our hostess, ready to faint from fright at the apparition.

"We've getten a robber i' th' house; and what's moor, he's getten a brace o' pistols, and au seed 'um in his breast."

"Why, what can you mean?" anxiously rejoined his mistress.

"Whoy, the gentleman as coom in this arternoon i' th' postchay is no gentleman, au know. He's left a big chest i' th' haw, and it's filled wi' silver plate, and au think as how he's a cracksman, making his lucky wi' a precious lot o' swag."

Here we all arose from our seats, and for the first time I became acquainted with the news of a fresh arrival.

"Call Mr. Jeffries immediately," said our hostess, in a state of considerable agitation.

"Stop," said I, interposing; "it may be a mistake after all, and it would be a pity to disturb him."

"A mistake!" somewhat contemptuously ejaculated Jim; "there can be noa much mistake about a mon wi' a brace o' pistols in his breast in a 'spectable house."

"Well," I replied, "let us first see the chest you speak of as being filled with plate."

Accordingly we adjourned to the hall, taking the lights with us, the rest of the house being in stilly darkness, and all the doors closed for the night. On our way, I inquired of the frighted Boots where the gentleman was when he saw the pistols.

"Au met him upo' th' stairs as he was gooin' to bed, and seed 'un wi' my own eyes fro' th' handle to th' barrel."

We now stood beside the chest; it was large, evidently of great strength, and was, moreover, secured by two locks.

"Lift it, sir," said the Boots, in a whisper to me. I caught hold of one of the handles with both hands, and it was just as much as I could manage to raise one end of it from the ground.

"Hark to this," cried Jim, in a subdued voice, as he seized the handle and gave the chest a shake. There was no mistake about it—it was the rattle of plate!

Our forces had by this time been increased by the addition of the

chambermaid and ostler, all looking at each other in silence, alarm being depicted in every countenance.

"What's to be done next?" I inquired.

"Depend upon it he's the robber of Rogers's bank," observed the steward.

"I should like to have the chest opened," said our hostess; and every countenance seemed to respond to the desire. I gravely suggested the unlawfulness of such a proceeding without a magistrate's warrant, but curiosity was evidently getting all-powerful, and the steward, fancying matters were assuming a serious aspect, quietly departed.

"I shall not be able to sleep until I know the contents of that chest, after what Boots has seen," said our hostess; "how can it be opened?"

"Whoy, if it warn't for his coomin' and catchin' us," whispered Jim, au could soon spring them-ere locks."

"You mean, you could pick them," said my friend, addressing Master Jim with an inquiring look, as though he were speculating where the boot-polisher could have acquired such a branch of useful knowledge.

For my part, I must confess that I was becoming as curious as any of them, and equally desirous of having a peep at the contents of the suspicious-looking chest; but then I reflected the proprietor might come like a wolf on the fold, pounce upon us whilst we were overhauling his property, as he slept in the first gallery, and in the stillness reigning around would, in all probability, hear the sound of any operations on the object of our suspicions. And again, the recollection of the information conveyed by Mr. Boots about those murderous pistols was anything but agreeable. At this juncture, a genius was revealed amongst us in the person of Helen, the chambermaid, who suggested that we might lock the robber in his chamber, as the key was in the lock on the outside.

"A very good idea, Helen," said her mistress. "Boots, will you slip up and turn the key?"

"Naw, naw," replied that cautious functionary; "au'l ha' nowt to do wi' it; whoy, he moight happen to shoot me thro' th' door."

The difficulty now was as to who should "bell the cat." Time pressed, delay was dangerous, and, influenced as much by my love of adventure as aught else to undertake the duty declined by Jim, I slipped off my boots.

"Now, Helen," said I, "show me the door of his room; you can stand at the top of the stairs, and point it out; mind and keep the light as much shaded afterwards as possible."

"The fourth door on the left," whispered Helen, as she took up her position on the platform at the head of the staircase.

Silently I crept along the gallery, scarcely daring to breathe. I gained the door; the key I found as Helen had described; and, as I placed my hand upon it, the thought flashed across my mind, should the key grate at all, we shall be in a pretty considerable fix; not unlike the position of the Highlander in the cave in the midst of dirking the young porkers, and, finding the light from the entrance suddenly obscured, to his interrogation of the cause, was answered by his companion from without, "Should the tail break, you'll soon find what stops the light;" he being at the time engaged with all his might and main holding by the tail, endeavouring to prevent the ingress of piggy mamma, who, summoned by the cries of her progeny, was rushing to the rescue.

Slowly I turned the key; the bolt sprung, but, for the life of me, I

could not shoot it: there it hung, as it were, on half-cock; and there I was obliged to leave it, satisfied that, if the robber attempted to come out, the shooting back of the bolt would give us ample warning. I withdrew quietly, not having made the slightest noise, and joined the party below, who were anxiously awaiting me. Having reported progress, the next thing we did was to station Helen at the top of the staircase as a look-out, to give us timely warning. Jim the Boots soon brought three or four large meat-skewers, and, bending the point of one of these about an inch and a half, he went to work, as my friend observed, like a man who properly understood his business.

The first lock he quickly sprung, but the second was a teaser; Boots innocently enough remarking, that it it was the hardest lock to pick "he ever see'd."

Our patience was well-nigh exhausted; but still the lock resisted all Jim's efforts. Skewer after skewer was tried, but without effect; at last, the operator making a final effort, away sprung the lock with a "click." Hush!

In that interesting moment, down the staircase Helen came flying like a fairy, and, with the hurried ejaculation of "He's coming!" vanished from our sight.

Ostler and Boots quickly, but noiselessly, followed her example; in their haste taking with them the only light, leaving us in total darkness. There was but little time for deliberation; and in a second after the chambermaid's startling announcement had been made, my friend, the hostess, and myself, had gained the bar just in time to close the door quietly ere the stranger had revealed himself. Peeping over the curtain of the bar door, we perceived a light flickering at the top of the staircase, which, brightening as he who bore it advanced, presented to our gaze the figure of a tall, dark-looking man in a dressing-gown; in one hand he carried a candlestick, in the other a pistol! Not a sound, not a breathing was heard amongst us as the owner of the chest descended the stairs. Pausing for a moment when he had reached the entrance to the bar, he elevated the candle to examine, as far as the light would penetrate, the place where we were ensconced; then slowly descending three or four steps more, he again raised the light, and, shading it with the palm of his hand, threw its glare along the spacious hall. With breathless attention we watched his every movement, not daring to utter a single whisper. Fortunately the chest had been left in its original position. Having cast a look upon it, and apparently satisfied that all was right, he gave one more glance at the bar, and then slowly retired. As he reascended the stairs, every step seemed to take a weight from our hearts; in less than half a minute he was gone; we heard him moving gently along the gallery, followed by the closing of his bedroom door.

As in the tragedy of "Macbeth," where, in the opening scene of the third act, the witches appear on the blasted heath severally emerging from all parts of the stage, slowly drawing towards the centre, the weird sisters beckoning to each other in a very mysterious manner, when the first witch sings,

Speak, sister, speak; is the deed done?—

so was a similar scene enacted by us after the disappearance of the mysterious stranger.

Slowly each ventured forth from his hiding-place, and noiselessly crept

into the darkened hall; a candle soon glimmered in the darkness, and human shadows appeared. Exchanging whispers, we approached a common centre—namely, the plate chest,—and the shadows soon resolved themselves into chambermaid, boots, ostler, hostess, my friend, and myself; and *again* we stood by the mysterious-looking box. After a brief consultation, and a general agreement that all was right, Jim quickly dropped upon his knees, my friend holding the small flickering light, and the rest of us anxiously awaiting a sight of the vast treasure about to be revealed to us.

Slowly Jim raised the lid.

"Hush! hark!" whispered the chambermaid, startling us all again.

We listened; all was still as death.

"Go on, Jim; all right."

Jim put in his hand; there was a rattle.

"Silver spoons, so help me——," said Boots, in a low tone, which implied there was more behind, handing about a couple of dozen of the articles he had named out of the chest.

"Well, what else?"

"A flute."

"God bless me!" articulated Mrs. Jeffries. "What else?"

"A tea-caddy."

"A tea-caddy!" repeated all of us, in amazement.

"And all the rest is books," said Jim.

"Books! what sort of books?" I inquired, beginning to be rather nervous.

The Boots handed up one of the volumes, and opening it, by the solitary light I found it was a work on the law. He handed me up another; it was of a similar character. Another and another; they were all alike—"Coke upon Littleton."

"Oh law!" exclaimed the hostess, in great alarm.

"Here's a dilemma!" said I. "'Tis pretty plain that we've been picking the locks of a lawyer's box!"

It was amusing to see the anxiety each and all displayed to replace different articles as we found them, which was soon effected; but to lock the chest again we found to be impossible. Each one stared alarmedly at the other, seeking counsel and consolation in vain. Magistrates' warrants, parish constables, county prisons, and actions at law alone suggested themselves to us in our trepidation. The best conclusion we could come to was not to breathe a word of the adventure, but let matters take their own course; and with this resolve, blessing all lawyers, we severally sought our rooms.

It was late the following morning when I made my appearance below, when I immediately entered the bar, to learn if aught had transpired relative to the strange visitor and his chest. The first person I met was mine host.

"Good morning, sir!—good morning! Well, this is a sad piece of business, isn't it?" quoth Jeffries.

"Yes, it is," said I—"the result of strong curiosity; and I suppose our peeping must be paid for."

"Peeping or no peeping," he rejoined, "here's two men in the house, guarding back and front."

"The devil there is!" said I; "then he must have gone to work early. Does he know us?"

"No; he said nothing to any one, but went about it very quietly."

"Humph! Matters begin to look very unpleasant," said I.

"Very," rejoined Jeffries; adding, "it is a very unpleasant occurrence to me, for the duke may be offended with my allowing him to stay here."

"I should be sorry for that, Jeffries," said I, "and will take measures to exonerate you from all blame; but I don't see what the duke has to do with it."

"Enough to do with it, I should think, when he almost frightened him to death early this morning."

"Frightened! Frightened by whom?"

"Why, by this chap, to be sure."

"What the d—l are you talking about Jeffries," said I, quite bewildered. "Do you mean to say that the lawyer has frightened the duke?"

"I don't know about his being a lawyer, or what the d—l he is, but he made his way into the duke's bedroom this morning, and laid claim to nothing more nor less than the estates. His grace hallooed out for assistance, the servants rushed in and secured him, and have taken from him a brace of loaded pistols."

"Oh, indeed," said I, beginning to breathe more freely; "then there is nothing said about opening a chest?"

"Opening what chest?" inquired mine host, with a puzzled look.

I now discovered that Jeffries was totally ignorant of our night's adventure, which, after relating to him, we proceeded more closely to examine the box, that we might ascertain who this claimant to the duke's estates could be, Jeffries stating that his insanity was beyond a doubt. We found little or nothing in the box to throw light on the subject, a name alone, without any address, appearing on the fly-leaf of one of the books. I now perceived that the inn was surrounded by keepers, who had received strict orders not to lose sight of the tall stranger should he again issue forth.

After breakfast, as I stood at the hall door, the cause of all our anxiety, and proprietor of the mysterious chest, joined me, and entered freely into conversation. His appearance was gentlemanly, his manners pleasing, and he conversed very intelligibly upon a variety of subjects, until we touched upon the subject of game, and the abundance of it on the D—— estate. He then became excited, and assured me that it was his intention to destroy the game altogether immediately he came into possession. Whilst we were conversing, a chaise drove up to the door containing two gentlemen, who proved to be the father and brother of the lunatic. The rest is soon told. From his relatives we learned that our mad visitor was by profession a solicitor, practising in L——, and had unfortunately become subject to the strange hallucination of his being the rightful heir to the D—— dukedom. The moment he had been missed from his house, our informants, whose conjectures as to the course he would take had fortunately proved correct, had posted after him immediately.

After dinner the unfortunate one accompanied his friends very quietly on their way home. We were all, of course, not sorry to witness his departure; and to us in particular who were concerned in opening the mysterious chest, as very satisfactory indeed was regarded the termination of the "Adventure at the Village Inn."

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXII.

HAD not the manner of Lancelot de Brederode been such as to convince Arkel, who knew him well, that Paul was a personage of no small importance in the eyes of that wild youth's father, the grave courtesy of Count Henry could leave no doubt on the subject upon his mind; and it was with no small pride, natural in one so inexperienced, that he remembered it was through his means so valuable an addition had been made to the confederacy. He was ignorant how often, and how soon, when an aim is reached, the means by which it is attained are forgotten. Luckily for the duration of his illusions on this head, the illustrious name which he bore was sufficient to ensure him the respect and flatteries of any party, notwithstanding his own deficiencies.

Paul felt interested in no ordinary degree in coming in contact with a man whose other faults he willingly overlooked for the sake of his firm adherence to the persecuted faith. Boldness and endurance were the chief qualities of Brederode's mind. By them alone had he risen to be chief of a party, for he was not otherwise qualified for so difficult a position. These are generally so powerful in their effects, that they involuntarily command respect, even when, as in Brederode's case, they are not accompanied with many other merits. One glance at Paul enabled the experienced man of the world to ascertain what sort of character he had to deal with, and that many words would be thrown away if they did not actually interfere with the effect he wished to produce. His address was, therefore, couched in a manner likely to produce a favourable impression on a Fleming. It was blunt and soldier-like, but not rude; equally free from the ceremonious exaggeration imported into the Netherlands by the Spaniards, and from the insolence with which they invariably treated those whom they considered as inferiors.

"I understand that my young friend here," said he, pointing to Arkel, when Lancelot, in obedience to a sign from his father, had left the room; "I understand my young friend here was not able to afford you all the information you desire before actually consenting to make one of us, and that you wish to obtain from me personally more explicit details. Is this statement correct?"

"Perfectly so," replied Paul, "except in one particular. It is not for my individual satisfaction that I am so cautious, but for that of the Lutherans in Antwerp, who have reposed a trust in me at the present crisis which I feel it my duty to justify by as much prudence as I can possibly command."

"What is it you more particularly desire to know?"

"Everything, my lord," said Paul, bluntly. "Not that I mistrust this young gentleman's veracity, but his statements, unknown to himself, may be incorrect; at any rate, they are unsatisfactory and limited."

"Has he not told you that the aim of our association is to obtain from the king, if possible, by fair but firm representations, liberty of conscience, the abolition of all religious persecution, under whatever specious name it may have been introduced—inquisition—decrees of the council of Trent—it matters not what? All these innovations are equally illegal and oppressive, and we are bound to resist them. This is the substance of our request, though, of course, conveyed in humble language, such as one can alone use in addressing princes. But, methinks, every child in the Netherlands knows this by this time." And as Brederode spoke, an impatience which he could not control betrayed itself in his voice and looks.

"True, my lord," said Paul. "Were not this perfectly understood, wherefore should thousands have gathered together at the very first notice of your presence within these walls, and have hailed it as that of a deliverer? But the public rumours about the late occurrences at Brussels are too vague and contradictory to be in any way relied upon. What was the regent's answer to the request?"

"Why," said Brederode, cheerfully, "we may consider our triumph as partly achieved. The duchess evidently stands in no small fear of us, and what we have already obtained from her may well embolden us to expect more from the king."

"This is joyful news, indeed," said Paul, whose brow gradually cleared as Brederode spoke. "What has the duchess granted?"

"Much; you shall hear and judge," said Brederode. "She observed, and, indeed, not without some show of reason, that she had it not in her power to abolish anything within these provinces without the king's consent, being the minister, not the guide of his will; but that what she could do she would. She promised to suspend all religious aggressions of what kind soever throughout the land, until such time as the king, having had the case duly set before his eyes, both by herself and others, should decide upon what were most fitting to be done."

"Gave she her word upon this?" inquired Paul.

"Not only was this her written answer to our petition, but she sent us later her counseller Assonville, and Berty, her secretary, to show us copies of the letters she was about to send to the chief authorities, civil and religious, of the different towns in the Netherlands, forbidding, henceforth, in matters of opinion, all inquiries, fines, confiscations, incarcerations—indeed, all grave punishments—until the king shall have otherwise decided."

"This is more than I dared to expect!" exclaimed Paul. "And has the regent made *no* reservation in this judicious measure?"

"She were not herself," said Arkel, laughing, "if she had not left herself some loophole to creep out of in case of need."

Brederode appeared for a moment embarrassed, whilst Paul, fixing his keen grey eyes searchingly upon him, rejoined,

"Is it indeed so, my lord?"

"Why, not exactly," said Brederode, somewhat hesitatingly; "the clause she adds seems but fair and natural after all; these orders are to be strictly adhered to, except in case of unforeseen disorders and acts of aggression. But such are to be submitted to her own direct cognizance, and that of the privy council; so you see, on the whole, we have been fairly dealt by."

"Very," said Paul, emphatically; "God grant that this success may last—that our joy be not premature."

"We have every reason to hope," replied Brederode. "Besides her own statement of the present condition of the Netherlands, upon which it were folly to reckon too implicitly, she is about to send two envoys to Spain to represent our griefs, and the evils which may arise if they be not redressed. The Lords of Berghe and Montigny, chosen for this purpose, belong to our party and faith, and can, therefore, be fully trusted. They start on this mission in a very short time."

"When will they return—or will they ever?" said Paul, with a look expressive of doubt.

"The Count of Egmont went and returned," observed Brederode.

"Once," said Paul; "who knows, had he tried a second time, if it would have been thus?"

"Nay, we must not mistrust the honour of the king," said Brederode.

"'Put not thy faith in princes,' are words that stand written in the book of wisdom, that the wise may be warned," rejoined Paul, dryly.

"As it is not we who incur the risk, and those who do, take it willingly upon themselves, I see no reason why we should not rejoice at a measure from which good is so likely to accrue to our cause."

"You are right in the main, my lord," said Paul, with a sigh. "But these gentlemen, who devote themselves thus recklessly for the general good, are held in high esteem by all who know how to honour the nobility of deeds and character as well as that of ancestry."

Arkel perceived, by a sudden change in the countenance of Brederode, that there was something in the feelings expressed by the merchant that grated on his ear, and he hastened to remove the impression.

"The king will not touch a hair of their heads, for he knows the country would rise in arms to avenge them."

"And, my lord," said Paul, "if the king receive not favourably the representations of these noblemen—if he refuse to ratify the written promises of the regent, or any of the recent transactions, what then? Are you prepared for this emergency?"

"Methinks your unwillingness to foresee any other but an unfavourable issue to our endeavours, argues that you merchants and Lutherans of Antwerp are not over anxious to avail yourselves of a more favourable one."

"You wrong us," said Paul, coolly; "we are ready to buy with millions, should it be necessary, the lenity of our sovereign, or rather, I should say, his adherence to the oaths he has so solemnly vowed. But the merchants of Portugal have already resorted in vain to similar measures; and we, too, I fear, shall find them fruitless. The Duchess of Parma, alas! will never enact the part of the Queen of Hungary to these unhappy lands! We must look for the worst, my lord."

"Well," said Brederode, "I do not see why that need cast us down. The money you seem so ready to fling at his feet to obtain a boon, might be used to force concessions from him. Mercenary troops are, sometimes, more efficient in similar enterprises than native ones. What is gold?—a paltry substance, after all, if it could not be made the means of achieving the heart's desire; I mean, when that desire is after great and just things." This clause seemed inspired by the slight but perceptible smile that curled for an instant Arkel's lip as he heard the spendthrift noble speak so lightly

of the metal which his listener was likely to estimate so differently. "Then," continued Brederode, "what with your money, our extended connexions with the Protestants of France and Germany, the good-will of all Catholics who love liberty, and the noble and illustrious names we have already enrolled among us, if the merchants and Protestants of the commercial cities will unite with us, methinks we shall be strong enough to form a barrier between our country and its foreign oppressor. But then," continued he, after a momentary pause, which neither of his listeners chose to fill up, "money, you see, is the mainspring of all, and money is, unfortunately, the very thing we most lack."

"That," said Paul, with decision, "we are able and willing to provide, if assured of its being applied to useful ends."

"Of course, of course," replied Brederode, with a smile. "We ask none to act blindly—that were requiring too much, perhaps. Is there anything more you would know, Master van Meeren?"

"I am afraid I must draw still more largely on your patience, my lord," said Paul, modestly, "for there are yet some points on which I feel anxious."

"For instance?"

"Did the regent give the confederates any promise of personal security, in case the king were not to grant, or even to approve of their demands?"

"None, I am forced to confess. We have repeatedly entreated that she would admit by word of mouth, if not by writing, that we were merely acting with a view to the king's interest, and in his service—a fact which we might well plead, considering we place ourselves between his anger and the irritation of the people;—but we could obtain nothing of her but evasive answers, the value of which she well understands on all occasions of difficulty. 'Time,' she said, 'would show what was our real aim—she had no means of judging;' and much more to the same purpose."

"But what said her eye and frown?" inquired Arkel. "They speak plainer, often, than her lips."

"They, certainly, boded us no good: we cannot flatter ourselves in that respect."

"The king will call you rebels," said Paul, calmly; "but that you have doubtless foreseen?"

"Not exactly," said Brederode; "nor do I yet feel willing to believe it. Our petition was at first couched in most imprudent tones; but the Prince of Orange carefully revised it, and as he returned it to us, and we presented it, I think nothing could be more guarded."

"Is, then, the Prince of Orange all that we have dared to hope?" exclaimed Paul, thrown off his guard by the spell of that name. "Oh! then, indeed, are the Flemings saved, and the Netherlands have a father to guide, not a tyrant to crush them."

"You anticipate somewhat too rashly on what the future may, nay, doubtless will bring to pass," said Brederode. "The prince is not *openly* ours; but through his brother, Count Louis, and other indirect channels, he, in great measure, guides us. That his secret feelings, prepossessions, and even interests, bind him to our party, who can doubt?"

"All Belgium looks up to him with hope and confidence," replied Paul, earnestly, "especially we men of Antwerp, who reflect with pride

upon his being our hereditary viscount. If we had but the slightest assurance of his real sentiments and views in this affair, it would be of great effect."

"I can give you proofs," said Brederode, "if that be all; but we will wait for a more convenient moment. Half of his good town of Breda—and it contains men of no trifling merit—and half of Bois le Duc adhere to us boldly, the other half more covertly. The same may be said of Maestrich, and numberless other towns. You see, Master van Meeren, how matters stand. I have neither embellished nor concealed anything. I have owned, frankly, our deficiencies and insecurity, our need of pecuniary assistance, and shown, likewise, the possibility there is, when peculiar circumstances render it advisable, of becoming one of us without proclaiming it to the world. Our young friend here," said he, pointing to Arkel, "is an instance of this."

"Nay," said Paul, smiling, "I have not the same good reasons to plead for secrecy. I cannot yet answer for those who have deputed me, my lord; I must first lay all I have this day learned before their eyes, and suffer them to exert their own judgment freely in so grave a matter. But, for myself, I beg to take the binding oath—to devote myself, my fortune, my whole energies, without reserve, to the noble cause you have embraced. When our nobles peril their long-descended honours, and life itself, unreservedly for the common weal, we merchants should not stand back, methinks, but stake our wealth, the only thing we possess, on the same cast."

"Your sentiments are worthy of a coat-of-arms," said Brederode, offering his hand. "Allow me to drink to you and our new bond."

The count approached the table that was still covered with the fragments of an early meal, and pouring out some wine for himself and Paul, he drank, in flattering terms, to his accession to their community. Paul replied with the "*Vive les Gueux*," that was already the rallying word of the party to which he thus irrevocably pledged himself.

When Paul had retired, Brederode thanked Arkel warmly for so valuable an introduction.

"Your protégé is worth gold in every sense of the word," said he, gaily.

"He will bring hundreds of men and thousands of dollars to the cause," returned Arkel, triumphantly. "The Protestants of Antwerp, especially the Lutherans, have unbounded trust in him."

"That is a great object gained; and if I mistake not the man, bold yet cautious, enterprising and true, he is admirably calculated to perform the arduous task of emissary. We are sadly in need of such. All informations should, henceforth, be conveyed by word of mouth: written documents are dangerous. Margaret of Parma will despatch a whole swarm of spies throughout the land. In important, decisive moments, this man will prove a treasure. Again and again do I thank you. Ah! young man, we might indeed have owed you more, far more than words can tell."

"Nay; let me stop you there, Count Henry," said Arkel, resolutely. "However ardent my wishes may be in that respect, I cannot—I dare not make any attempt of the kind you would allude to. Time, and time only, must decide that point."

"We will trust, then, to time—he brings all things about, as you say,"

replied Brederode, falling back into his habitual manner, which had almost been changed to entreaty in the few last words he had spoken. By-the-by, I understand that you and Lancelot had some foolish discussion at Cuylemberg's? That hot-headed boy of mine is always getting into mischief. I hope you bear him no malice?"

"None whatever, I assure you," replied Arkel, frankly.

"That's right: one should have no grudge over wine. The fiery spirit of the grape, when added to our own hot humours, makes us often foolish and intractable. But you are a generous youth; you have it from the stock. Now let us to the other gentlemen, who have missed us long enough."

Chapter XXIII.

Van Diest's mode of progressing did not, as may be supposed, bring him in any contact with the swift Arabian and its rider; but this was no matter of discomfiture to that worthy, who trusted to his own sagacity for finding him when he should have once reached Brussels: "For," argued he, "Chievosa would not have posted away thus hurriedly if he had no business there—nay, business of a pressing nature. St. Anthony! my holy patron, how he galloped along! A good burgher, an upright-minded man, would have broken his neck twenty times for one! But, I doubt me, Master Chievosa's honesty will never run him into such risks; I rather think the contrary quality will do it for him. However, as I say, business cannot be transacted in an hour, of whatever nature it be. I shall always arrive in time to sift it out. Cornelia (he had rather disrespectfully bestowed on his easy, well-fed Flanders mare the name of the Roman matron), Cornelia hates to be urged one jot beyond her usual pace, so I'll even take it coolly." And coolly enough did they take it, both man and beast.

Whenever a chance traveller crossed Van Diest's path whose equipment did not bespeak him above his own condition of life, he invariably accosted him; and if the stranger were not of a very surly disposition, he would be sure to extract from him some information. Gossip being essentially Van Diest's element, such meetings were sources from which he derived great amusement; and important indeed must have been the cause that could have induced him to forego them. Nor did he fail to stop at every place of entertainment on the road, as much for the sake of hearing what every one might have to relate, as for creature comforts, which Van Diest by no means disdained. Cornelia had many points of resemblance with her master. Every tree whose boughs were within reach, every plot of grass upon the road, had for her irresistible attractions; and Van Diest was in these instances the most indulgent and patient of masters.

Despite all these delays, the widow Van Raden had the unexpected, though not unusual, gratification of seeing her old friend early the next morning. She was not in the happiest mood possible; for a severe fit of the gout had of late confined her to her home; a circumstance which, of course, did not soften the asperity natural to old age.

"How now—alone, my good dame?" exclaimed Van Diest, on seeing her. "Why, it is charity to come and keep you company awhile."

"You may well wonder to see me alone!" replied the old invalid, querulously; "as if the old and the sick had ever friends to surround

them! And as to charity, you have done yourself a small one in coming here to-day. Trina is gone, I know not where—all my stock of good things are gone too, and I have not yet provided fresh."

"Oh! I'll manage to do with what you have—anything does for me," said Van Diest, good-humouredly.

"I don't know that—I don't know that," muttered the old woman, shaking her head discontentedly; then, eyeing her visitor with no small portion of malice through her spectacles, she added, "There is plenty of salt fish, it is true, and salted meats; but as to pullets, or delicate fruits, I have none in the house; no green cheese from Friesland, no fresh eggs to make your favourite dishes, not even fresh butter. You have indeed come at the wrong hour."

"On the contrary," persisted Van Diest; "you are out of sorts and in pain. Surely the presence of a friend must be a comfort to you?"

"What's the use of comforting when one cannot cure?" grumbled the widow, still unwilling to be soothed.

"Have you not tried your usual remedies?" inquired Van Diest, sympathetically. "Have you consulted no neighbouring barber?"

"Don't speak to me of barbers!" exclaimed the aged female, with great indignation. "Barbers, indeed!—they ought to be hanged for their knaves' tricks!—and shame upon you, Master van Diest, for spending so much of your time in such low company. Have you not heard of the death of poor Van Erp?"

"Van Erp dead! I knew not a word of it. Well, that's the pleasure of absence, be it never so short; at one's return, one always hears something new."

"I suppose you will call it a pleasure if, when you next come, you hear of widow Van Raden's burial?"

"That's quite a different thing again: you are unfair, my old friend. But pray what was the cause of Van Erp's death—was it the gout that killed him?"

"No; it was the barber. You shall hear: and if ever I trust myself again to—— Well, it doesn't matter; no barber shall have the killing of me, that's all. You see, Celsus the Quack, who made so much noise about his wonderful cures, more especially for the manner of them, gave out the other day that the aspects and conjunctions were most favourable to the healing of all possible maladies, principally the gout; that they had not stood thus for the last thirty thousand years, nor would probably reappear for as many more; that he wished all sufferers from podagra would assemble at his house, from every corner of the earth: 'I would,' said he, 'so deliver them of their pain, that they should never have any more cause for groans and sighs in this world.' He explained, that although this benign and long hoped-for aspect was not in our zenith, that is, above; nor '*in laterale aliquo signo*,' that is, sideways; but directly in the '*nadir*,' which means beneath us—I remember all his words; I learnt them by heart with frequent reading—yet this circumstance was the more favourable to his purpose, as the mysterious agency, in its passage from the opposite surface of the earth to ours, would encounter our feet, and work great things in them and us. 'As the nutriment of trees is communicated by the roots,' said he, 'so might the spirit of life be invigorated through the soles of our feet; for, were the aspect in the zenith, then would its influence most infallibly

draw the gout from the feet to the head, which would be no gain!' Nine o'clock in the morning, six minutes, two seconds, was, he asserted, the time when the aspect would be in its full force, and instantaneous and radical cure might be effected by means of one single little stroke of the lancet. Young Van Elz, and several other young men, went. I scarcely know why, but poor Van Erps, though bedridden for years with the gout, was so elated with this news, that he conceived himself made young again, and, in spite of all his poor housekeeper—and she is a sensible creature in her way—could say, he would be transported to the barber's shop, bed and all; 'For,' said he, 'I shall not return in the same manner as I go.' Nor did he, poor fellow; but he little guessed the why.

"Well," continued the old woman, not a little soothed by the deep attention expressed in Van Diest's china-blue, goggling eyes, "no sooner did I hear of this than I thought of going too—God knows, I have borne my complaint long enough to wish to get rid of it. Trina luckily suggested that I had better wait, and see if the miracle were to be accomplished. I argued, that I was not likely to live the thirty thousand years that must go by before this rare aspect was to shine again. She assured me the barber, to her certain knowledge, was at times mistaken, and that constellations often reappeared, to his no small wonder, when he least expected them. What with that—which, after all, I knew to be true—and my being too much in pain to move, I was fain to content myself with waiting to hear what the brothers Van Elz—of whom you must know one is Trina's young man—would say of the matter. It would seem that, upon their arriving, the apprentices caused Peter van Elz to stand on a particular spot of the floor. Then each posted himself on either hand of him. Another couple were busied in preparing basin and lancet, whilst the barber himself was alternately muttering and mumbling unintelligible words over an awful-looking book, whose leaves he was eagerly turning, and measuring, in a grave and anxious manner with the compass, a large heavenly globe. There they were,—just think of it—what a critical moment!—Peter van Elz between the two apprentices; all three as still as if they had been cut in stone; all the other people in the room—for many had come, as you may well suppose, some to be healed, but more to see the wonder—with their mouths and eyes wide open, not daring to stir, for fear of disturbing the *aspect* and the barber. There lay Van Erps on his bed in the corner."

"Sancta Maria! had I but been there," sighed Van Diest. "But I am always too late—always unfortunate! Pray go on. Well, Van Erps in his bed in the corner."

"Well," continued the narrator, "the lancets having been sharpened on the steps of the staircase—for it was a stone one—the 'prentices stood ready prepared. The two who guarded Peter van Elz held him by the arms, whilst a third, on his knees before him, held the instrument right over the vein that runs to the end of the great toe. Other patients were in like manner surrounded by other proficients in the art, whilst Master Celsus went on muttering and mumbling, all eyes being upon him the while. Suddenly his brow became grave, his look fixed, and, putting his hands forth, he exclaimed, 'Soon, soon, soon!' then, 'Strike, strike!' and all the lancets were struck, and blood flowed on all sides; upon

which the barber exclaimed, 'Good people, it is all right, I see, and you are saved!' These were then bandaged up, and stools provided for them. Van Erps and a couple more remained to be operated upon; so Celsus returned to measure the globe, and turn over the book, to find out when the blessed aspect should be directly under the feet of his next patients. After a short time he again shouted, 'Now, now, now—strike! strike!' As Van Erp's gout was an inveterate ailing of long standing, he ordered that more blood should be extracted from him than from the others; upon which the poor man grew paler and paler, until the people called out to Master Celsus, asking whether it were not enough. 'Let it flow,' said he; 'it won't hurt him—let it flow.' Again he turned to his book and globe, and again the people reminded him that the man was getting weaker and weaker, and would probably die. 'Nonsense,' said he; 'let it flow on, I say—it is merely a syncope—let it flow.' Shortly after, the people screamed out with one voice that he was dead. 'Let's see,' said Celsus; and, coming near, he examined him. 'By G——, he is dead!' said he—'dead as a rat! May God comfort him; I have done my best. The cause of his death is simple. Not standing on the floor as the others did, but lying on a bed, the aspect could not work its influence up his feet—that's clear. Gentlemen, I wish you all a very good day!' So saying he left the house, and shortly afterwards, as it has since come to light, the town itself."

"Whew! what a mistake!" exclaimed Van Diest. "Well, to be sure! strange things happen every day."

"Ay, but not cures for the gout; that's no every-day find, I can tell you."

"I know but of one remedy," said Van Diest, "and that is patience, helped by a groan now and then. This was our great emperor's favourite saying; surely it must be a true one."

"Well, if the emperor thought it advisable to be patient, a poor old widow like me should not grumble too bitterly; and, to say the truth, my good master, I begin to feel somewhat better since you have been here. Ah! here, in good time, comes Trina."

At that moment a fine bouncing Flemish girl entered the room, and greeted Van Diest as an old acquaintance. She was a distant connexion of the widow Van Raden, and having been left an orphan at an early age, had been happy to accept the offers of her aged relative, whom, by dint of a little humouring, and an unalterable placidity of temper, she had contrived to manage completely, and so to ingratiate herself as to be the acknowledged heir of her not inconsiderable property.

"Trina, my dear," continued the widow, "let us have something as soon as possible. Master van Diest has not tasted a morsel since he entered my house. Bring us, my child, the green cheese that I lately got from Friesland, with an eye, you know, to Master van Diest's next visit, and the Holland butter, and the cold pullet, Trina, that was laid by in the buffet but yesterday."

As the widow enumerated these articles one by one, Van Diest's usual smile, which nature had so indelibly stamped upon his countenance, absolutely expanded into a *bonâ fide* grin of pleasure; widow Van Raden smiled too, but this time it was good-humouredly. She enjoyed her friend's surprise, for she had merely hinted at the deficiency in her

larder to vent a passing fit of spleen; but talking had done the good old dame's heart good, and Flemish hospitality soon got the upper hand in her bosom. Trina spread upon the table a snow-white linen of homespun thread, and placed upon it pewter dishes and drinking cups bright as silver; and shortly after Van Diest was partaking contentedly of the dainties set before him, whilst his worthy hostess and her assistant Hebe were purveying no less liberally to his spiritual wants. Every scrap of scandal was carefully raked up in their remembrance for his particular amusement.

"And what may have brought you here this time?" inquired the hostess, after she had poured out her own budget of news. "There must be something in the wind—some new fête, or another entrance of nobles expected in Brussels, which I have not yet heard of—for I well know you would not have come unless you had some such motive to bring you."

"I am come on business of a graver nature," replied Van Diest, significantly, suffering his hand to fall gently on the table, and inclining his head a little sideways at the same time—a favourite gesture with him when he meant to be particularly sagacious; but the widow was not inclined to be contented with so vague a reply.

"Really," said she, "I thought you never meddled in business of any sort. This is something new and surprising."

"Oh! it isn't the sort of thing you mean," said Van Diest. "It is a very mysterious affair indeed—very mysterious. There, Miss Trina, what would you give me to know all about it? Not the ring Master van Elz is to give you shortly, I'll warrant."

Catherine laughed and blushed; but the widow Van Raden was not to be so easily put off.

"So-o!" said she; "that's bad. My old friend, never burn your fingers at another man's candle. That'll never do, believe me. Mind my words whilst you may."

"Very true," replied Van Diest, coolly laying down the empty tankard which he had just drained; "but then you know the proverb,

Wer die Nootse will hawen,
Der musst sie kraken."

"Ay; but, my dear old friend," continued the widow, "the nut's sometimes not worth the cracking, and a tooth is easily broken."

"*Cosa fare*, as the Italian has it," said Van Diest. And, carelessly shrugging his shoulders, he rose from the table, and approached Trina, whose fair cheek he honoured with a paternal pat. "My search is not, after all, of so very dangerous a nature. The young maidens of Brussels would be my best guides in this matter, for it is to meet a handsome young man that I have come all the way from Antwerp. But I won't ask you, Trina, if you have seen him, perchance, and can tell me where to find him; for, of course, your eyes and ears are now engaged with one, and one only?"

"I don't know that," replied Trina, coquettishly. "Tell me what your young man is like, and I'll tell you if I've seen him."

"For shame, Trina! And you a bride elect!" exclaimed the old woman, indignantly. "When I was your age——"

"You were everything that's good, as you are now," said Van Diest.

"I say it without flattery to you and offence to Trina—the very prettiest girl I ever saw."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the pleased widow. "I never expected you, Van Diest, would have said such a thing. But this young man, what is he like?"

"He is a Spaniard," said Van Diest, tapping the first finger of his left hand with the first finger of the right, preparing to enumerate the diverse properties of the object of his search. "He is tall, slight, and dark. He moves with the ease of an eel, and looks as proud as a turkey-cock. And, moreover, he should have arrived here on a very fine barb, although it is as likely he may have entered the town on his two feet."

"Did he not wear a large soldier's cloak, and a slouching hat, like a German?"

"Precisely. Whence know you that?" my pretty maiden.

"Van Elz told me of such a one," said Trina, eagerly. "He alighted yesterday at the hostelry opposite Peter's windows, and he, his mother, and sisters, were all struck with his appearance. When Peter's mother asked this evening his name of the good woman of the inn, she said it was Diego Maya. Is that the name?"

"No," said Van Diest; "but possibly it may be the person for all that. Did you see him?"

"I did not," said the girl, "but Peter van Elz did; and, if you like——"

"Thank you. If you but tell me the name of the hostelry, it is all I want."

"I'll take you there myself," said Trina, prompted as much by curiosity as kindness, "if you will but wait an instant, till I have thrown on my faille." And the young girl tripped out of the room.

"Shall you find the young man yet there?" asked the old woman, still desirous of satisfying her curiosity covertly.

"It is very likely I shall not," answered Van Diest, not in the least ruffled at the idea. "He is very rapid in his movements. I should not wonder if, by this time, he is half-way back on his road home."

"Jesu Maria! how unconcerned you look about the matter, Master van Diest! Why, you have the queerest way of hurrying yourself and of catching a runaway that I ever beheld."

"I never hurry myself," replied her guest. "I have learned that maxim in the course of my fishing experiments. Your hasty angler never gets a bite."

"Fish! That's quite another thing. But men, and young men especially——"

"The difference is not so great as you may think, my good dame. You women often fail in catching them by that very bad policy of yours of straining, straining, pulling, pulling, in marvellous haste to catch the best; and that's one reason why you so often miss the game."

"But if you don't find him, what then?"

"Oh, that need not distress you. If I don't find him this time, I will another. It comes to the same. It will only afford me a fresh excuse to come and trouble you; and as long as I find a kind friend, green cheeses, and frothy beer, at widow Van Raden's, she may reckon upon me, and not owe me much for it either. But here comes Trina, ready for the walk; so adieu!"

JACK DORY, THE FREE-TRADER.

By W. H. G. Kingston, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "PETER THE WHALER," &c., &c.

Chapter IV.

Hastings found his boat hauled up on the beach, and two men tending her. It was a foggy night, but the fog was somewhat like a silvery veil, so that it could not be called dark; and though objects at a distance were shut out from sight, anything near could easily be seen.

The boat was quickly launched, and Hastings, taking his seat, steered in the direction where he believed his cutter was at anchor. It was no easy matter, however, to find her, and he was unwilling to fire a musket to attract the attention of those on board, lest it should warn Dory that he was already in search of him.

"How far out is the cutter?" he asked, after they had pulled some way. "I should have thought by this time that we ought to have been alongside."

"So should I, sir," answered the midshipman. "We steered directly for her, I'm certain. I thought so! I see her now, just on the starboard bow. We kept a little too much to the southward."

"If that's the *Scourge*, she's under way," observed Hastings, as they drew within hail. "*Scourge*, ahoy!"

"Ay, ay," was the answer.

"Who is that hailing?" asked the lieutenant.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the reply.

"Who is that hailing, I ask?" again demanded Hastings.

"Ay, ay, sir," was still the only answer to be obtained.

"Do any of you know whose voice that is?" asked Hastings of his boat's crew.

"It's none of our people, sir," answered the coxswain. "I don't think, sir, that's the *Scourge* at all. She's more like the *Daring*, sir, with Dory on board her. If she was our cutter, they'd have known your voice."

"So I suspect," said Hastings. "We'll not venture alongside till we are certain. Who has the middle watch?"

"Keep off, or I will fire into you," was the answer to this question, followed immediately by the discharge of a musket.

Before half a minute had elapsed, another musket was fired off, directly on the larboard beam.

"I see how it is," said Hastings; "that rascal is the *Daring*, and our people fancied that the musket she fired was a signal from us. It has shown us the whereabouts of the *Scourge*, at all events. Give way, my lads."

The boat's head was now turned to the southward, and in a short time another vessel hove in sight. They pulled up towards her with more caution than before.

"What boat is that?" demanded a voice from on board.

"*Scourge*," replied Hastings.

"All right, sir," answered the voice. And the commander, recognising the speaker, steered the boat alongside his own vessel.

As soon as he reached the deck, he ordered the hands to be turned up, the anchor to be weighed, and sail to be made. The men went to their duty with alacrity, for the boat's crew soon let them know that they were close to the vessel of the noted smuggler, Jack Dory, and might be any moment engaged with her. They all well knew the character of her commander, and that he was not a man to yield without a desperate struggle. Indeed, as the *Daring* was larger and better manned than their own vessel, it was not likely he would strike without fighting.

"We shall have a light wind off the land, I think, before the morning," observed Hastings to his chief officer; "and, as the *Daring* is inside of us, we must take care she does not give us the go-by."

"I wish we had daylight, sir," replied the mate; "it would then be easy enough to watch her; but with this thick fog it is impossible to know what to be after. The worst of it is, till we are fairly under way, her people will know, from the noise we make, exactly where we are, while we cannot tell where they are getting to."

"We must do our best, at all events, and as she has no more wind than we have, she cannot get far from us," said Hastings. "We'll have the boats ready to tow a-head."

The anchor was soon run up to the bows, and the sails were set, but as yet not a breath of air filled the wide field of canvas spread to catch it.

"Heave the lead, and let it rest at the bottom," said the commander; "we will see if she drifts much."

The lead was hove, and it was found that the vessel was slowly moving to the westward, but as there was but little tide in that part of West Bay she did not shift her position much. Everybody was on the look-out for the smuggler, but he was nowhere to be seen, nor did any noise indicate that he was near them. Full preparation was made to give him a hot salute should he be found; the guns were loaded, run out, ammunition was got up, and boarding-pikes and small arms were placed in readiness on deck. One would have supposed that the ship of a foreign enemy, or of some desperate pirate, was to be encountered, rather than a vessel manned by Englishmen—the relations and friends of the crew of the king's cruiser. Hastings walked the deck impatiently; the sea-air and the excitement gave him a strength he had not experienced for some time, and he hoped to gain credit and promotion by the capture of the noted smuggler; yet he knew full well the danger, and that so far from expecting a cheap victory, it would be a bloody and hard-contested one at the best. Dory's vessel, the *Daring*, was the largest and fastest cutter then in existence. She measured upwards of two hundred tons, and was of great beam and strongly built. She carried four guns on a side, besides several small brass swivels which graced her quarters, and she had muskets and boarding-pikes, not to speak of pistols and cutlasses, enough to arm every man belonging to her, and a few who might be shipped on occasion, or required to aid in defending a cargo when landing.

His crew numbered upwards of a hundred and twenty hands—bold fellows all, and the officers he had under him were of great trustworthiness and experience, stanch to him and themselves. The *Daring* was thus a very formidable customer to deal with, and few revenue cruisers could compete with her even if they could catch her; indeed, it was whispered

that whenever she was seen shaping a course for an English port, the king's officers thought it best not to meddle with her.

Dory was a shrewd fellow. Half the number of guns and men might have enabled him to contend successfully with any revenue cutter then afloat, but he wished to carry on his trade in peace, and had no fancy for fighting, so he made himself so formidable that no one had any wish to fight with him. Fifty or sixty pounds a week was a large per centage on the profits of his trade, but he considered that it answered, as his traffic doubled in consequence.

Such was the formidable vessel the *Scourge* was now about to encounter. Her gallant commander, however, thought not of the fearful odds opposed to him; his duty was to enforce the revenue laws by the capture of all vessels engaged in illicit traffic, and to that class there was no doubt the *Daring* belonged. His officers and men entered into his feelings, and were as eager as he was to get hold of the smuggler. Yet their crew did not number half as many men, and their vessel was considerably smaller. She carried but six guns, of less weight of metal, and a few brass swivels, though her people were in all respects as well armed as the smuggler's, with a consciousness, also, that they had right and law on their side. The free-traders knew, that if they fought it was with a halter round their necks should they at any time fall into the power of the laws. Both watches were on deck on board the *Scourge*, and never had a brighter look-out been kept. Still, not a breath of air came to dissipate the thick fog which hung over the sea; the sails hung down listlessly, without even flapping with impatience, for the sea was so calm that not the slightest motion was perceptible on board the vessel.

Her people, meantime, amused themselves with low whistles to summon the reluctant wind, and with holding up their fingers, moistened with their lips, to discover should one side appear colder than the other, whence the wind would come. An hour more passed in uncertainty, and still all was calm. There was no use towing the vessel till they could see the smuggler, for that might only lead them further from her. At last a gentle air came off the shore from the north-east, but it was too light to drive away the mists. It filled, however, the cutter's sails, and sent her through the water.

"Keep her head south-west," said Hastings to the helmsman; "the tide will run outside for nearly four hours more, and without a breeze the *Daring* cannot get round Portland; so we cannot miss her."

The cutter held her course, slowly running before the wind. She would thus at daybreak be well out in the Channel, where she could command a good view of the bay. As the morning drew on the wind freshened a little, but not sufficiently to cause even a ripple on the surface of the water. It caused, however, the fog to break, and as the sun rose above the ocean, long clear avenues appeared, towards which many eager eyes were turned in expectation of seeing the smuggler. They looked in vain; not a sail was to be seen. Higher rose the glorious sun, the white wreaths of mist rolled off before it down to leeward, and clear blue sky and water appeared in their serene beauty, but the vessel of the smuggler was nowhere to be seen. Many were the expressions of disappointment uttered on board the king's cutter at the disappearance of their expected antagonist.

"How can she have crept away?"—"Where can she have got to?"—"Was she ever there?"—was asked by different individuals.

"Yes, I see'd her as big as life," answered one of the gig's crew; "and by the same token I thought she'd fire into us."

"It's not more nor I thought," observed an old one-eyed quartermaster; "you never can tell any of Dory's dodges. I do believe that he'd carry that craft of his right in the wind's eye of a hurricane, if as how he wish'd it. There's a saying, that he never will be caught if the whole navy was sent to look after him, and I believe it."

Hastings was the most vexed at thus losing sight of the smuggler. He had taken command of the *Scourge* for the express purpose of putting a stop to the lawless career of the outlaw, and as he was aware of the accusations brought against other officers of fighting shy of the *Daring*, he determined to run no risk of meriting them.

A few masses of mist only remained in the south-west; they probably were nearer than they seemed, and being at length absorbed by the sun's rays, a single sail was seen in that part of the horizon over which they had rested.

Hastings pointed it out to his mate.

"What do you think of that, Mr. ——?" he asked. "Is she our friend?"

"I don't know where else the *Daring* can have got to, if that is not her; but she's used a quick pair of heels to get so far ahead of us," was the answer.

"We'll stand towards her at all events, and if the wind favours us, and neglects her, which in this fine weather it possibly may, we have still a chance of speaking to her," said Hastings. "Pack everything we can carry on the cutter; we must make her walk along as she never walked before."

Those who have cruised in the British Channel in fine summer weather, must know how very uncertain the wind is; sometimes coming from one quarter, sometimes from another, and during the day generally boxing round the compass—now a nice breeze; then a calm; while, at a little distance, vessels are running by one; or, on the contrary, one has the pleasure of gliding swiftly over the water, while the sails of other cruisers are flapping idly against their masts. Thus the *Scourge* found it.

As soon as sail was made on her, the breeze at the same time freshening, she rapidly gained on the stranger. The hopes of all on board were raised high; every spyglass was in requisition and fixed ahead, but as yet it was difficult even for the most experienced to pronounce with certainty. The stranger, meantime, lay like a log on the water, without the power to alter her position. On they went, and every minute drew nearer.

"If that ben't the *Daring*, I'm dashed!" observed the old quartermaster, eyeing her narrowly with his one orb. "But stay a bit; we are not up to her yet."

"Huzza, my lads!—that's the *Daring*, and we'll have a lick at her, and fill our pockets with prize-money," exclaimed a youngster, who had scarcely seen a shot fired in earnest.

"Catch your hare before you cook it; and remember, a man some-

times gets more kicks than halfpence," muttered the old quartermaster, who, from his age and knowledge, was privileged to say what he liked.

Scarcely had these observations been made, when the mainsail flapped heavily, and by slow degrees the cutter lost her way through the water. It was now the *Daring's* turn, for no doubt remained that the chase was her, to move ahead. Before the wind reached her, a gun was run out at the bows, and fired; but she was out of range, and the ball fell harmlessly into the water. The breeze, which had been moving round from the east to the north-west, now filled her sails, and, like a hare springing from her form, away she went, steering a course directly athwart the Channel.

"She's bound for a French port; and if we could catch her when she's got her cargo aboard, we should fill our pockets with prize-money, my bo's," observed the one-eyed seaman, forgetting his former caution, to the youngster.

It was trying work to the patience of all on board, as they saw the chase creeping away, while they had not the power of moving through the water, though they were rapidly drifting up Channel with the flood, which had now made. The cat's-paws of wind played along the water to tantalise them—sometimes not coming near them, and then just filling their sails again to leave them as becalmed as before.

The chase had now almost run them out of sight, when a more steady breeze sprung up, and once more they were after her. Again they overhauled her; she in her turn seemed becalmed; the breeze freshened—bravely the *Scourge* dashed on, throwing the spray in sparkling jets from her bows, but the wind outstripped her. The *Daring*, also, felt its influence—away she also went. It was now a fair trial of speed; chance had before favoured the king's cutter. The smuggler had the fastest pair of heels; she drew ahead fast; but the *Scourge* persevered. All day she continued the chase—evening came on; and as the sun set, the *Daring's* gaff-topsail was seen dipping beneath the horizon. The shades of night covered the ocean, and hid even that small portion of her from their view. When daylight again returned, the smuggler was nowhere to be seen; and, completely baffled, the *Scourge* was obliged to retrace her course to the coast of England, there to watch, in the hope of his return.

Chapter V.

As soon as Jack Dory got on board the *Daring* after leaving Captain Dalling's cottage at Portland, he ordered the boats to be manned and sent ahead to tow; and he got out some long sweeps, which, with his strong crew, he was able to use very effectually in moving his vessel through the water in calms. He thus had the start of the *Scourge*, and he moreover found a slight breeze when he got out into the tide, which gave him a good offing by daylight.

He was perfectly ready to meet the *Scourge*, or any other cutter, if he could not avoid it; but he saw no object in fighting when nothing was to be gained by it, and he therefore made the best of his way into Cherbourg harbour. He had there a large and very valuable cargo waiting for him, which he quickly shipped, and the following morning,

with a strong breeze from the south-west, sailed for the shores of England.

The spot appointed for the run to be made was on the coast of Dorsetshire, between the Isle of Wight and Portland, at a place called Duddle Cove. The cutter could there run close in and almost heave her goods on shore; she could, besides, if the revenue-officers should attempt to molest the people engaged in running it, protect them with her guns.

The *Daring* had a fine run during the greater part of the morning, but towards the middle of the day the wind fell, and she remained becalmed till nightfall. A light breeze then sprung up, and enabled her once more to approach the land.

"We shall do it still, if the breeze holds," said Dory, as he walked the deck with his mate, Bill Tubb, an Isle of Wight man, a smuggler almost from his cradle. "Please the pigs, we'll have the goods on shore before the morning, and half-way up to London."

"I think as how it's possible; but we shall be close run for time to do the job before the morning," answered Tubb. "Howsomedever, there's not many as would wish to come athwart us just then. We are not far unlike a savage dog with a bone between his paws—we're dangerous."

"There's one chap would hinder us if he could, let me tell you," observed Dory. "I mean him who now has the *Scourge*, which we led a fool's chase t'other day. He'll be on the watch for us, depend on it. Keep a bright look-out there forward, my son."

This last order was addressed to the man stationed on the watch forward.

"Ay, ay," was the answer; followed quickly by the cry of "A sail on the weather-bow."

"I see her," exclaimed Dory; "and a cutter too—the *Scourge*, or I'm mistaken. Turn the hands up, Tubb. We've work before us."

That she was a king's cruiser of some sort they were not long kept in doubt, for a shot from her came speedily whistling across their bows as a signal for them to heave to.

Dory laughed scornfully as he muttered, "Are those your tricks, my beauty. I'll soon show you that two can play at that game if you attempt the same fun again."

The shot was repeated, and the cutter drew nearer to them.

"Steady, my sons," exclaimed Dory; "don't fire till I tell you, and then we'll give 'em a dose which will sicken 'em for interfering with us for some time to come."

The position of the two vessels was as follows The wind was south-west. The *Daring* was standing in for the land, running free on the larboard tack, and the *Scourge* was on the starboard tack, standing across her weather-bow. The intention of the king's cutter evidently was to commence the action by raking her antagonist; but Dory was not to be taken thus at disadvantage. All his men were at their stations. Some were at the great guns, others at the swivels; some tended the mainsheet, and others the jib and foresail; while the rest, with cutlasses by their sides, stood with muskets ready in their hands. Again the cutter fired her bow-gun, the only one which she could bring to bear, and so well was it

pointed, that the shot struck the *Daring's* bulwarks, the splinters wounding two of her men severely.

"Steady, now my sons," again exclaimed Dory; "don't be in a hurry; we'll give it them directly."

The cutter came on steadily, but just as she was about to cross the *Daring's* bows, Dory shoved down his helm.

"Round in the mainsheet, my sons, with a will," he exclaimed, as he did so, and the vessel luffed up to the wind. "And now give it them, my sons. Fire—fire all of you."

His men were not slow to obey. His broadside was poured into the cutter, accompanied by a shower of musketry and the discharge of the swivel-guns, which seemed to have done much damage. The smugglers, however, did not escape without some punishment in return. Every one of the cutter's shot took effect: one man was killed outright, and two were wounded by the fire of musketry which she kept up as she passed. The smugglers reloaded their guns as fast as they could.

"Keep her away again," sung out Dory; "lower away the peak—round in the mainsheet—we'll gibe the mainsail, and give her another dose before she comes about."

His orders were obeyed. The heavy boom came over with a swing, which seemed as if it would carry away the mast; the gaff was quickly again swayed up, and the *Daring*, ranging up alongside the *Scourge*, poured in another broadside, which did still further damage. It was returned with spirit; but the *Daring* had everything in her favour, and the king's cutter had little chance against so powerful an antagonist. The two vessels now ran on for some time, exchanging broadsides with unabated spirit, and inflicting considerable damage on each other. Several men had been struck on board the *Daring*, but they could not tell what their opponent had suffered, till, a stronger breeze than before springing up, her mast was seen to totter, and with a crash over her side it went, and she remained a mere wreck on the water. The smugglers on this set up a loud shout, which was answered by one of defiance from the people of the cutter, who instantly began to clear away the wreck of the mast, that they might have free scope to work their guns.

"Now," exclaimed Dory to his mate, "we've got them under our thumbs; shall we sink them, or shall we let them swim?—one is as easy as the other."

"Oh, as to that, I'd let 'em swim," answered the mate, who was a humane man; "they can't do us no more harm at present, if we get out of their way; and if we sink 'em it will be found out, and every one will be after us. It would be too much like murder, you know, to please me, as they were only doing what they were ordered when they attacked us."

"If they drive on to the Shambles, or if a gale was to spring up, and they were to get into the race, it would be no fault of ours, you know," said Dory; "so, if it's the wish of the crew, we'll just give 'em a parting salute, and leave them."

Another broadside was accordingly discharged into the unfortunate *Scourge* as the *Daring* shot by her; but as her guns were by this time clear, she returned the fire with spirit: her crew, giving a loud cheer of defiance, continued working them while the smuggler remained within her reach. The smugglers answered the cheer with laughs of derision

as they sailed away from her, and her low hull disappeared in the obscurity.

"That's what they've got for attacking us," observed Dory. "You'll all bear witness she fired first at us; and how were we to know in the dark what she was, or where she came from? She might have been a pirate, or war might have broke out again with France, and she might have been a French privateer, for what we could tell."

With such observations the smugglers endeavoured to excuse their lawless acts, and to persuade themselves that they should escape punishment. The *Daring* stood on till she reached that part of the coast where the run was to be made. The expected signals were eagerly looked for. One light on the summit of the cliff, and another on a level with the water below it, were observed. It was what had been agreed on. The smuggler hoisted a light to her mast-head, and quickly dipped it again, and then stood boldly on till she was within fifty yards of the shore, in a sheltered bay, with high cliffs on either side. Her sails were then handed, her anchor was let go, and she was surrounded by a dozen boats, ready to convey her cargo on shore. The coast was reported clear, and there was little attempt at concealment Indeed, so completely shut in was the spot, that nothing going on there could be seen from any other part of the coast. By the light of the lanterns on the beach, a number of people were seen collected, and some twenty or thirty packhorses stood ready to carry up the more valuable portion of the cargo—the silks and satins and laces—into the interior. It was extraordinary with what expedition the *Daring* was unloaded, how well every one worked, and what order and regularity was observed. Each boat had its proper officer, who noted with great exactness the goods committed to his charge, and, as soon as he had received the quantity he expected, he signified the number of bales and packages to some one on board, who stood with book in hand ready to note it down; and he then made the best of his way to the shore, where he saw them transferred to the backs of horses, whose drivers gave him a similar acknowledgment. Thus boat after boat was loaded, and in less than two hours the hold of the *Daring* was perfectly clear, the lights and horses and men had disappeared, and the beach, which had lately been the scene of so much animation and activity, was silent and deserted. One boat only remained: it was that which had been kept to carry on shore the bodies of the two smugglers who had been killed in the action with the *Scourge*. The circumstance of their death and of the engagement had not been mentioned to any of the people employed on shore; and as, in those days, coroners' inquests did not interfere with the liberty of the subject, it was merely necessary to say that the men had died at sea to gain them Christian burial. It was a gloomy sight as, by the light of a single lantern, so as not to attract observation, the bodies, sewed up in their hammocks, were lowered into the boat. Then, under charge of four trusty fellows, they were secretly conveyed on shore to the nearest churchyard, in which a liberal fee gained their interment, without many questions being asked. This trouble was taken, as seamen have an especial aversion to the idea of being thrown overboard when it is possible to be buried on shore.

The *Daring* having successfully accomplished her undertaking, hauled out of the bay, and, before the morning dawned, was again on her way to a French port. After his late exploits, Dory felt that it would be foolhardy to venture in broad daylight in British waters.

Chapter VI.

Several weeks had passed by, and Jessie Dalling had received no communication from Hastings. When once a girl feels sure that she is beloved, she no longer thinks it necessary to restrain the current of her affections; and, therefore, her thoughts dwelling constantly on him every day, her love grew stronger, and the more eagerly did she look forward to his return. At last a rumour reached Chisselton that the *Daring* had encountered the *Scourge*, and had had a severe action with her. It was said that many of the crew of the former had lost their lives, but that, after fighting for some time, the *Daring* had quitted her brave antagonist in a sinking state, and that nothing more had been heard of her since. Captain Dalling endeavoured to conceal this story from his daughter, but their servant-girl unfortunately heard it, and went full of it to her mistress. The news struck a chill to poor Jessie's heart, for she had learned to feel for Hastings as a pure and guileless girl only can feel for the first object of her affections; and although she could not bring herself to believe the tale true, the very doubt had almost as bad an effect on her as the reality.

It was evening; the lights had been brought into the drawing-room, where Jessie was sitting with her father. He was reading, and she had a book before her, but in vain she attempted to comprehend the meaning of the words on which her eyes rested. The window was still open to admit the air, for the atmosphere was sultry and oppressive. Her thoughts were far away on the waters of the ocean; and she was picturing to herself him she loved, wounded and bleeding, and with honour and credit blasted, sinking with his brave crew beneath the waves. A slight noise aroused her; she looked up, and beheld the face of Dory gazing in at the window. She uttered a cry of terror, for she had lately so completely associated him in her mind with the murder of Hastings, that she could not think of him without horror. Without waiting to announce himself, he sprung into the room. Captain Dalling rose from his seat with astonishment at this abrupt entrance of a person he did not at first recognise. Dory did not wait to be addressed.

"I beg Miss Jessie's pardon," he said, speaking rapidly; "I'm afraid I frightened her. She thought I was a thief come to rob the house, I suppose; but I'm not quite as bad as that yet, though, if you'd believe what they put in print, I'm too bad for hanging. What do you think, Dalling?—they have been offering two thousand pounds to any one who will bring me in dead or alive. It's a heavy sum, is it not, to weigh against a man's honesty? I must dock off a few of my friends, or they may prove false. When once you mistrust a man, it's your own fault if he betray you. But I don't count you, Dalling, among my false friends; and that I am not one to you I came up here, at not a little risk, to prove. But why does Miss Jessie look so frowningly on me?"

"My daughter is not aware that you remark her looks," observed Captain Dalling. "However, tell me what brought you here, Southgate? I should have thought you would scarcely have ventured to land on the shores of England again."

"And I fancied that you knew me better than to suppose there was anything I dare not do," replied Dory. "But I must not lose time.

I came to tell you that you are in danger, and to advise you to escape without delay. I received notice from one of my spies that information has been laid against you by that scoundrel, Sir James Ousden, stating that you have been a pirate, and are leagued even now with smugglers and outlaws. I learned, moreover, that he, with a whole body of constables and followers of his, are coming here to apprehend you, and that they will be here either to-night or to-morrow at latest."

At this announcement Dalling turned pale.

"But how can they prove anything against me?" he exclaimed. "You know, Southgate, that I am innocent of the first charge; and that if I have aided you in your smuggling transactions you compelled me to the work."

"I know that," answered Dory. "But in a court of law other things may come out, and a man may be innocent without being able to prove himself so. It's dangerous to run the risk, let me tell you; so I would advise you not to try it. As soon as I heard of what was in the wind, I knew the only thing to be done; so I brought the *Daring* off here, and you must get on board, and I'll run you over to France in no time, where you will be safe from all your enemies."

"Oh, do not, my father, venture on board that vessel," exclaimed Jessie, starting up and seizing Dalling's arm. "We will escape in the smallest boat, if it is necessary, rather than this."

"Why, what is in the wind now, Miss Jessie," said Dory. "I won't conceal from you that it is on your account, more than on your father's, that Sir James Ousden is so zealous on the side of the law. He thinks that if he can put the captain out of the way he shall get you into his power. I don't believe that in the end any harm could come to your father, but while he was in prison much might come to you. That was the reason I am so anxious to get you both out of the country. But why, Miss Jessie, are you so unwilling to trust to me?"

"Can you ask such a question?" answered Jessie. "Because you have been guilty of many cruel murders; because you are an outlaw and a pirate."

"Stay, stay, Miss Jessie. Before you give me so many hard names, let me deserve them," exclaimed Dory. "I never committed a murder; and, though I'm an outlaw, I'm no pirate; I never robbed in my life."

"What! Did you not murder the officers and crew of the *Scourge* by leaving her to sink without attempting to save them," asked Jessie, in a voice choking with agitation.

"Not I," answered Dory, "for the officers and crew of the *Scourge* are at this moment alive and well, and on board a bran new brig, which is to be sent after me."

"Did Mr. Hastings escape—was he not drowned?" asked Jessie, in breathless haste.

"No, Miss Jessie, no! I tell you he's alive, and determined to hang me if he can catch me."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Jessie, and burst into tears; but they were tears of joy.

This exclamation, and the evident interest shown by the young lady for Hastings, were far from gratifying to Dory.

"Well, Miss Jessie, and now you don't think I'm a murderer, as you called me just now, will you venture to come with me?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Southgate," she exclaimed, looking up with her eyes suffused with tears; "I wronged you, and I am sorry for it."

"Don't say a word about that," said Dory; "but I must ask you a question. You love this Mr. Hastings, and you wish to marry him, though he's a poor lieutenant, and I'm looked upon as a rich man. It is so, is it not?"

Jessie's blushes betrayed the secret of her heart.

"You need not speak—I see how it is," continued the smuggler. "Well, I'll not stand in his way if he's an honest man—so don't be afraid; and to prove to you that my love for you is unselfish, I give you this paper. Don't read it till I am gone; and if your father gets into difficulty about me, bring it forward, and it will set all to rights."

As Dory spoke he put a packet into Jessie's hands.

"And now, Captain Dalling, my mind is altered. I came here to persuade you and your daughter to go over to France with me, hoping there to win her for my wife. I find that she loves another. After what has occurred I find that this part of the country is too hot for me; and as I may not have an opportunity of meeting you again, I will no longer keep in my hands the means which I have hitherto possessed of exercising an influence over you. With that paper you may defy Sir James Ousden and his myrmidons; stay and dare him; you will be safer probably than on board the *Daring*. And now, farewell Miss Jessie. If you ever see me again, I hope it will be under the name by which you first knew me, of Henry Southgate, and not that, by which the world knows me, of Jack Dory."

Jessie was moved by the subdued manners of the bold smuggler. She gave her hand, for her feelings would not allow her to speak. He pressed it respectfully to his lips, and was about to quit the room, when his steps were arrested by a loud knocking at the front door, at which a voice demanded entrance in the king's name.

"Don't be alarmed," exclaimed Dory; "it is that villain Ousden and his gang of bailiffs. He can do you no harm, but he might bother me if he caught me, so I'll just go out by the way I came in, and then do you open the door. However, don't let anything induce you to quit the house before the morning, and if my aid is wanted I'll not be far off."

Saying this, Dory leaped out of the window, and hurrying off through the little garden at the back of the cottage, was soon lost to sight. The moment he was gone, Jessie carefully closed the window and drew the blinds, and then took up the book she had been reading, Meantime, Dalling went to the front door, and in an angry tone asked the cause of that untimely disturbance.

"Open the door in the king's name, or we'll batter it down," answered several voices.

"At the command of the law I will open it as soon as I can withdraw the bolt," said Dalling, delaying as long as he could to give Dory time to escape. "This is an unseemly hour, gentlemen, to disturb a family, however."

No sooner was the bolt withdrawn and the key turned than several men rushed in together, as if they expected to be attacked from within. Among them he recognised Sir James Ousden, who seemed to be the most eager of the party. The sitting-room door had been left open, and as the

light gleamed forth it fell upon Captain Dalling's features. As soon as Sir James recognised him he exclaimed,

"I arrest you in the king's name—you are my prisoner."

"I must see your authority before I consider myself as such," replied Captain Dalling; "produce it."

"Here it is," said Sir James, drawing out a paper; "you can read it, if you please, in this room. I will allow you ten minutes to prepare for your departure hence. Watch the door there, and see that no one escapes."

Saying this, he entered the drawing-room, where Jessie was seated pale and trembling for her father's safety. As soon as he saw her he took a chair close to her, into which he threw himself, and commenced a flow of extravagant compliments such as at any other time, and from any other person, she would have laughed at. She now felt them as insults.

"It grieves me, my beauteous rose of the rock, hard-hearted as the soil on which you grow, that I must take hence your respected parent and leave you all forlorn," he continued; "but be assured, that compassion for your solitary condition will induce me to come and offer the consolations of my presence. Ah! lovely one, look not so frowningly on me; you know how I adore you."

"Silence, sir!" thundered the captain, in a voice that made the gallant start—"at least respect a father's feelings, and do not insult a daughter in his presence. This document appears correct, as far as I can judge, and to-morrow morning I will obey its commands; to-night I shall not quit my house without sufficient protection for my child."

"You refuse at your peril," said Sir James; "remember that I have the means of compelling you."

"At your own risk you will employ force," answered Dalling; "I shall not resist."

"If you are a man, Sir James, you will allow my father to remain," exclaimed Jessie, who rose and placed herself by her father's side.

"I must do my duty, fair lady," answered Sir James. "Mr. Dalling, the time I allowed is up; must I call in the constables? they will not, I fancy, be so courteous as I have been."

"You have received my answer, Sir James," said Dalling; "I refuse to quit my roof till to-morrow morning."

"Take then the consequences!" exclaimed the baronet, who had not expected any resistance. "Here, Gripe, Growl, execute your warrant on this person, and take him into custody. Where are the rascals?"

No one came, and he hurried out of the room to learn the cause of their absence. Just then his ears were saluted by loud cries and shouts, and the noise of heavy blows exchanged; and, as he reached the hall door, a body of men, well armed, some of whom carried lanterns, rushed past him, driving his followers before them. At the moment he appeared at the door, with the warrant still in his hand, the light of a lantern fell on his face.

"Ah, the very scoundrel himself we are in search of," exclaimed a loud voice. "Seize him, my sons, and off with him to the boat; he's the shark; the rest are worthless fry not worth the catching."

As soon as these words were uttered, Sir James found himself in the grasp of several powerful fellows with whom it was hopeless to contend, and, before he could cry out, his mouth was gagged, his legs were lifted

from under him, and he found himself carried at a quick rate down to the beach. He struggled and resisted with all his might, but for each kick he gave he received a cuff on the head, and a peal of laughter was sounded in his ear. His attendants, who had been scattered in every direction, rallied as soon as their opponents began to retreat, and followed close upon them, but they got so severely handled whenever they came in actual contact, that they found it safer to keep at a respectful distance. They were, however, near enough to see the band of smugglers—for such they believed them to be—reach two boats afloat, close to the beach, into one of which their master was placed, while the men were divided between them. The boats then instantly shoved off, and were soon lost in the darkness. While the constables, their satellites, and Sir James's servants and followers were standing bewildered on the beach, some gaping with astonishment, and others hallooing and abusing the smugglers—for, if their employer did not come back they did not know to whom they should look for payment for their night's work—a boat emerging from the obscurity pulled towards them.

"Oh, here come some of the smugglers again! Let's pay them off this time, and make them give us back Sir James," exclaimed those who were most afraid of losing their pay. "Huzza, my lads, give it them well—don't spare them."

With these cries, and with showers of blows from heavy cudgels, the people from the boat found themselves assailed as they leaped on shore. They were not slow, either, in returning the compliment, and so well did they wield the boat's stretchers, and a few drawn cutlasses which they were obliged to bring into play, that they very soon put the enemy to flight. The baronet's followers did not even turn to see if their conquerors were following, but scampered off inland as fast as their legs could carry them, cursing the object which induced them to venture on so unfortunate an expedition. The victorious party was headed by a young man in the dress of a naval officer.

"Do two of you come with me and the rest stay by the boat," he said, as he called his men together after their opponents had decamped; "if those fellows attempt to molest you, fire two muskets as a signal."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the brief answer; and, having given these orders, he took the path towards Captain Dalling's cottage, followed by two of his men.

He knocked at the door of the cottage, and it was shortly opened by the captain himself, who held in one hand a paper he had evidently just been reading, and his countenance showed that it had afforded him much gratification.

"Mr. Hastings!" he exclaimed, as his visitor entered, "you are come, indeed, most opportunely."

"So it appears, my dear sir," said Hastings, entering. "You seem to have had some smart skirmishing in your quiet island, and I rejoice to have arrived in time to protect you and your daughter, if necessary. Tell me, sir, how is Miss Dalling?"

"She may best answer for herself," answered the father, pointing to the drawing-room; "she is there."

Hastings almost flew into the room. Jessie regarded him for an instant irresolutely, considering whether he deserved punishment for his unaccountable silence; but there was something in his glance which told her that his heart was true and faithful, and, unaware of what she was

doing, she ran forward and threw herself into his arms. It was not, indeed, till he had pressed her to his heart, and bestowed many a warm kiss on her brow, that she sufficiently recovered her self-possession to release herself, and to sit down calmly by his side. Her father, who had been delayed in closing the door and giving some directions to the servant-girl with regard to the two seamen, then entered, and the strange events of the evening were speedily related. Hastings's eyes flashed fire when he heard of Sir James Ousden's behaviour.

"He shall repent this insolence," he muttered. "But what can have become of him and his followers?"

This question was in part answered shortly afterwards by the appearance of some of the persons in question at the door, who now, considerably crestfallen, came to ask if the captain was ready to accompany them. This tone was still further changed when they saw the officer's uniform.

"Where is your warrant?" he asked. "You have no power without that."

The warrant was nowhere to be found; and they were obliged to own that it must have been carried off with their master. Hastings made every inquiry of them as to who had attacked them and spirited away the baronet; but they had been unable to recognise any of the people, and could only judge that they were seamen and smugglers by their dress and the few expressions they let drop. They were then dismissed, to find their way home as best they could, with a reprimand to be more cautious in future how they ventured to attack people without first learning whether they were friends or foes. Hastings then returned, laughing, into the drawing-room, suspecting strongly that Dory had been at the bottom of it; but he forbore to ask his host any questions on the subject.

"I must now tell you my adventures, though I cannot in any way account for your not having received the letters I sent you," he observed. "You heard that the *Scourge* had had an engagement with the *Daring*, and that she, having twice as many men, and far heavier guns, treated us so severely that our mast went by the board, and we were left nearly in a sinking state. We fought as long as the enemy chose to stay near us, but as we could not follow her, we could do no more; and as soon as she quitted us we set to work to repair damages. We stopped the shot-holes, and got up a jurymast by the morning, when a strong north-easterly wind setting in, we were driven down the Channel, in vain endeavouring to reach a port, till we came off Falmouth. We should have been driven past that port also, but fortunately we were fallen in with by one of our men-of-war, which towed us in in safety. Our battered condition, and the number of men we had lost, was a proof that we had done our duty, and instead of blame, as I expected, I received commendation. I had long been promised my promotion; and while we were repairing the *Scourge*, I received it, and am now a commander. I joyfully gave up the cutter to my successor, and set off to come here. On my way through Plymouth, I found that I was appointed to the command of a new brig, the *Rapid*, just ready for sea, and I received orders to join her forthwith. I wrote instantly to explain the reason of my not coming, stating that I was given the command of the *Rapid* especially to retrieve my reputation by the capture of Dory. The government felt, I suppose, that they had scarcely treated me fairly

in sending me before against a vessel twice the size of mine. The *Rapid* is, however, more than a match for him; and though I admire the fellow's bravery and daring, I must do my best to punish him severely. This last trick of his, in carrying off Sir James Ousden, though the baronet may richly deserve the punishment, will be another charge scored against him. But, to my account of myself. When I first got out of harbour, I was sent to cruise in the mouth of the Channel, and was kept there for two weeks, till I was ordered up to Portsmouth. I am now on my way there; but while beating up during the ebb-tide in West Bay, I was becalmed about three miles from hence. We were therefore obliged to drop our anchor; and the temptation of coming on shore here was far too great to be resisted, as it could in no way interfere with my duty. My stay must be short; but my visit has brought joy to my heart, for it is sufficient to convince me that I am not forgotten. Captain Dalling, I cannot conceal it from you—I love your daughter, and have confessed my feelings to her. Will you give her to me?"

"If she loves you I will certainly not thwart her wishes," answered the father. "But, Captain Hastings—let me ask you—how can you think of marrying the daughter of a man whom you have seen the companion of a noted smuggler, who has even now a slur on his name which may never be removed. You are now fascinated by what you consider her beauty; but when you return to the world, and the high-born ladies with whom you have associated, will you feel as you now do, think you? I would inflict present pain to save you both future misery by a rash act."

"I love your daughter for herself!" exclaimed Hastings, passionately; and, bending forward, he took Jessie's unresisting hand. "Were I ignorant of her name and family, of everything connected with her, I should love her as I now do, and be as eager to make her mine. The love which cannot exist without extraneous advantages in the object loved, is worthless indeed. Promise me your daughter, sir, and then let me hear whatever you think will drive me from her. Whatever it is, I will remain faithful to the vow I here make, to marry her as soon as she will consent."

Dalling smiled at the young officer's impetuosity; yet he believed him sincere.

"I trust that you will hear nothing which which will make you repent a promise which I must call rash, although I cannot but feel pleased at hearing you make it," he observed. "My history shall be very short. My family is ancient and honourable. I was a younger son, and went early to sea, remaining for many years in the service to which you belong. Unhappily, when in the West Indies, I had a dispute with another officer—my superior in rank. He was clearly, grossly in the wrong; but by his conduct he compelled me to challenge him. He accepted my challenge, and agreed to meet on the shore of an unfrequented bay at the back of the island of Grenada, off which our ships were lying. I went, accompanied by one second. He had no one except his coxswain—the man whom you know as Jack Dory—to attend on him. We took our places, and fired. He fell mortally wounded. As he felt that his last moments were approaching, the fear of death operated powerfully on his conscience, and he was seized with a longing desire to make all the reparation to me in his power. He had strength to write, and was per-

fectly collected; and calling Southgate, the name Dory then bore, and my second to his side, he produced from a pocket-book a folded letter, and on the blank side wrote a full statement of the facts, acknowledging himself the only one to blame, and earnestly entreating that I might not be made to suffer. To this document he put his name, and desired my friend and Southgate to sign it as witnesses. He then committed it to Southgate's care, charging him to carry it without delay to the admiral on the station, and to let me know when I might again appear. Having expressed his forgiveness to me for having shot him, he in a few minutes breathed his last. My friend and I instantly retired to our boats, which was waiting for us at some distance, while Southgate called up some of the crew of his boat to convey their commander's body on board. I proved a very Jonah, for the boat which was conveying me to a place of concealment on the island was capsized, and my friend, with every other person on board, was drowned. I managed to escape the sharks, and to reach the shore, where, at the spot fixed on, I lay hid, expecting to hear from Southgate. I waited in vain. At last I found means of communicating with him, and discovered that he had not delivered the document. I learned, also, that the loss of the boat was not known, and that my friend and I were both supposed to have escaped from the island, and that I was dismissed from the service, and should run every risk of losing my life were I to appear. As a last resource, I again appealed to Southgate, but, for some reason which I could not discover, he refused to do me justice. I believe it was for the sake of the power he could thus gain over me. I at last had no choice but to quit the island. I did so, and under a feigned name entered the merchant service, before the mast. I did not serve long before I was raised to the rank of a mate, and after some time got the command of a fine ship. Twice Southgate discovered me, and each time insisted on joining my ship; nor dared I refuse his request. While with me he always behaved respectfully in public; but he was really my master, and I was compelled to overlook numerous acts which I should have considered unpardonable. At last he quitted me to return to the life he has since pursued. I ought to have said that, before I left England the last time in my character as an officer in the navy, I was engaged to a young and beautiful girl, of family equal to my own. She was the only person who believed me innocent of the crime with which I was charged. On my return home, I found that she mourned my supposed death, and, though I knew the risk I was running, I made myself known to her. Outlawed and poor as I was, the constant girl consented to be mine. Our plans were arranged. She went to stay with a relation who had never seen me. I became introduced as a stranger, under an assumed name, and we were openly married; though she offended her family by not giving them notice beforehand of her intention. She made several voyages with me, and our only child, Jessie, was after some years born. I had saved a small competence, and on the death of my wife I retired to this cottage, to devote myself to the education of my daughter, and to live as economically as I could, that I might, at my death, leave more for her maintenance. Southgate again discovered me, and compelled me on several occasions to aid him in his smuggling transactions. I felt degraded in my own sight at thus weakly yielding to him, but I had not the strength of mind boldly to throw off his influence. I still trembled lest he should betray me. This very evening, however,

he placed in my hands the important document, with his own signature, attested by two credible witnesses. I trust that the extenuating circumstances named in it will be sufficient to remove the stigma attached to me as the murderer of my captain, and enable me once more to assume my name and proper station in society, of which I have been so long deprived. If I do so, Captain Hastings, you will not receive in Jessie the portionless girl you now believe her to be."

"I would rather possess her as I thought her, without a dower, for herself alone," exclaimed Hastings, pressing her hand to his lips—an act of gallantry she rewarded with a sweet smile, which was worth, he felt, the wealth of India. "But," he continued, "I do not pretend to deny, that for her sake as well as yours, I shall rejoice to see you restored to a station to which I felt sure that you of right belonged."

It is not necessary to describe further the conversation which took place on that eventful evening. At last Hastings was obliged to take his departure, to get on board his brig before the tide should enable her to continue her voyage. One point remained to be solved: how his letters had not reached their destination? None of the party, however, had any doubt that somehow or other Jack Dory was at the bottom of it.

Chapter VII.

A week after the events we have narrated in the last chapter, Jessie received a letter from Hastings, informing her that he was again on the point of sailing from Portsmouth, to look after the *Daring*. The greater part of the letter is sacred from the public eye. A few days more passed away, and the last which Captain Dalling and his daughter were to spend at Portland arrived. The following morning they were to set off for London, when he hoped to establish his claims to his rightful name and property. For several days it had been blowing a strong gale from the south-west, and, although the wind was as high as before, the sky overhead was bright and clear.

"How magnificent the race will appear to-day," said Jessie to her father, as they were looking out over the foaming sea, from their sitting-room window, after breakfast. "After the fatigue of packing, a walk in the wind will refresh us both, and I long once more to bid farewell to that magnificent scene. The wonders of London can have nothing to be compared to it."

Captain Dalling gladly consented, and, accompanied by the faithful Neptune, they set out on their expedition. They had much to say respecting their brightened prospects, and Jessie was full of life and animation. Her father was often lost in fits of reflection. He was mourning that she, who had sacrificed all for him, was not with him to enjoy his anticipated prosperity.

After a brisk walk, they reached the rocky height which forms the Bill of Portland, overlooking the foaming caldron of waters. They sat down on a rock to rest; indeed, Jessie felt that without her father's support she should almost be blown away by the violence of the wind. The sight, as they gazed, was terrific as well as sublime. The whole ocean, as far as the eye could reach, seemed in a state of extraordinary agitation; but a broad line, extending due south before them, appeared

to rage more fiercely than any other part. The waves, instead of rolling in huge successive billows, like rows of hills advancing one after the other, leaped up in broken, irregular masses, with perpendicular sides and crested tops, which curled over and fell down like avalanches of snow precipitated from the mountain's summit to the valley below. Now the waves rose in one direction, then in another, and, after watching them for a length of time, it was impossible to predict the shape or size they might next assume.

"The race is acting its best to please us, as if conscious it is the last time it is to be honoured by our presence," said Jessie, laughing.

"I have never seen it more violent," observed her father; "woe betide the unfortunate stranger which should attempt to run through it now; none but a large vessel could live a moment in it, and I would rather not be on board even her."

It made the spectators almost giddy to look down on that wild whirl of foaming waters, and to listen to the loud rushing and roaring noise which assailed the ears, as at a fearful rate the tide swept by over the ledge of rocks projecting from the points on which they stood. Jessie kept her cloak wrapped closely around her, and was sheltered somewhat by her father's person; but it was impossible to remain long without being chilled, and they were about to quit the spot, when Captain Dalling's eye was attracted by the appearance of two sails coming up from the westward. The tide and wind were in favour of the vessels, and they flew rapidly along. He pointed them out to his daughter, and their interest was too much excited to allow them to commence their return home, though they would have found it difficult to say why the no very unusual sight should thus fix their attention. Captain Dalling having observed them carefully with his telescope, pronounced one to be a large cutter, the other a brig. "And they are carrying a press of canvas which no wise seaman would think of having spread in such a breeze as this. They stand up to it gallantly too. Ah, Jessie, did you hear the dull sound of a gun among the shrill whistles of the wind?" he asked.

"I did not notice any peculiar sound," answered his daughter. "But what do you mean, papa; is one of those vessels firing at the other? Yes, I think I heard the sound you describe."

"There is no doubt about it, Jessie; and what is more, that cutter is the *Daring*, and the brig can be no other than the *Rapid*. Hastings is in chase of his enemy at last."

On hearing this, Jessie's heart sunk with alarm.

"You said that no vessel could cross the race," she exclaimed; "and you see that they are standing up this way. What will become of them?"

"They are both stout vessels, and may possibly stand it, but Dory's intention is probably to run close in with the Bill, where the water is smoother, and where he thinks the brig will not follow, and then to haul up to the eastward of the race, and to stand away on a bowline."

Jessie was well acquainted with the nautical terms used by her father.

"But will Captain Hastings be so rash, do you think? It surely cannot be his duty to run so dreadful a risk?" she asked, in a tone of alarm.

"I do not see much danger, my love," said her father. "Hastings

will probably knock away some of Dory's spars, and will bring him to before they reach the race."

Every instant the two vessels became more distinct, and, as they drew closer, it was seen that the *Rapid* was well on the weather-quarter of the *Daring*, thus preventing her from hauling her wind, unless she could venture to run close under the bows of the brig, and also keeping her well into the bay. In the position in which the smuggler was placed, also, she could only bring one of her guns at intervals to bear, while the *Rapid's* bow-chasers were pointed directly at her, and kept up a continued fire, though, from the heavy sea running, very little damage could have been done.

It was a magnificent sight to behold the two vessels tearing through the foaming waves, and bearing aloft a crowd of canvas, which one would suppose sufficient to bury them beneath the tumultuous waters. With almost breathless eagerness Jessie and her father watched the result. Nearer and nearer the vessels approached. It was only thus going free that they could have carried such sail. Had the wind come a little more only on the beam, their masts must have gone over the side.

"They must shorten sail before they attempt to cross the race," exclaimed Captain Dalling, unconsciously showing how much danger he really believed to exist. "It would be suicidal madness to attempt it with that press of canvas aloft."

He did not exaggerate the danger. The *Daring* had all the sail set which she might have carried in a light summer breeze. She had on her, her mainsail and a large square sail, a square topsail and gaff-topsail, whereas, under ordinary circumstances, she would have had only a try-sail and storm-jib set. The *Rapid* carried her topgallant-sails and top-mast studden-sails; but the only damage which was likely to happen in consequence, was to have them blown away.

Hastings continued firing on the chase; indeed, as soon as he perceived what Dory's intention evidently was, he saw the necessity of bringing him to before he should reach the race. The ebb-tide had by this time come down, and thus meeting the wind, increased the tumults of the waters. Though the shot from the *Rapid* almost reached the spot where Captain Dalling and his daughter were standing, so deeply were they both absorbed in the scene before them that they did not perceive their danger. On came the *Daring*, now pitching her bows into a foaming wave, then rising to its curling summits. At last she reached the outer edge of the race. Dalling fancied that he could distinguish through his telescope Dory himself at the helm, aided by two other men, while his bold crew were holding on to the bulwarks and rigging. The *Rapid* ceased firing. Hastings was too generous to increase the danger into which the hard-pressed chase was running. He, however, was prepared to follow her. For some minutes she went boldly on. The waves leaped and danced round her; the water sprang up her sides, flying almost half-way up her masts, and falling down in deluges on her deck, still she rose above them. On she laboured through the broken water, seemingly thrown from each watery hill to the valley below, again to be cast upward. She no longer seemed to fly buoyantly over the waves as before, and each instant the tumult of the sea appeared more violent. The *Rapid*, meantime, was seen to shorten sail just as she reached the outer edge of the race. Not a sheet nor a tack was let go on board the *Daring*. At length she reached the very centre of the fierce race. A wave higher than its companions leaped up before her; she rose to its summit.

Down again she glided on its opposite side, her stern lifted high in the air. Ere her bowsprit pointed upward, a second wave arose, surpassing even the other, directly before her. Its curling summits reached her square sail-yard. Heavily pressed, she drove against it, but she rose not again. A cry of horror escaped Jessie's lips.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Captain Dalling, "they are gone."

The mad waves leaped wildly as before, in triumph over the *Daring* and her bold crew. On seeing the dreadful catastrophe, the *Rapid* hauled her wind, and under close-reefed topsails, with the tide as it then was, she was able to weather the race. As soon as Captain Dalling and Jessie saw that she was in no further danger they returned home, and the same evening she anchored safely in Portland Roads.

Little more of our story remains to be told. Sir James Ousden never again appeared, and there was no doubt he was lost on board the *Daring*. Jessie's father recovered his property and reassumed his proper name; while she married the gallant Captain Hastings, who proved himself a true-hearted sailor to the last.

ON SEEING TWO SWALLOWS LATE IN OCTOBER.

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

Ye birds that puzzle
Sages well versed in every "ology"—
Whether ye muzzle
Your beaks in winter, and your physiology
In mud-beds plunge (vide Selborne ornithology);*

Or swallows, whether,
Assembled all, ye hold debate awhile,
And then, together,
In wondrous flight, seek shores of distant Nile,
Or where bright skies on groves of myrtle smile—

Why do ye tarry
Now "winter's coming" speaks the burly blast,
And high doth carry
Leaves that in death around are falling fast,
Like tears of Nature weeping sweet summer past?

Ye look most lonely,
Of all your summer-day rejoicing crew
Remaining only;
As though ye deemed the sunbeams would renew
Again their revels with the flowers and you.

Perchance, however,
That ye have been (alas! if such the cause)
Obliged to sever
From all your tribe, with one and all's applause,
For some infringement of the swallow laws.

Or chance, 'twas here
Life and bright sunshine twitterers first ye knew;
And now ye fear
Here may ye never more those joys renew,
And so ye linger in your last adieu.

Still are ye winging
Your tireless flight, whilst, over hill and dell,
Old night is flinging
His herald shadows, louder the blast doth swell—
I must away. Ye lonely ones, farewell!

* White's Selborne.

THE DOCTOR.

(Professional Men.—No. III.)

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

When one comes to think of it, it really does seem a very alarming thing to have the assistance of a doctor. Just for a moment contemplate this not at all uncommon case. The medical gentleman visits you daily, perchance, for a long time; he inflicts upon you all sorts of restrictions, he commands you to abstain from a number of agreeable things, and to take freely of a number of disagreeable things; he renders your life a nuisance and a burden; and then, when you are quite tired out, and you tell him so, and seem to say you'll meet your fate, or, at all events, won't have his aid in struggling against it any longer, *then*, he says, "perhaps you'd better have a second opinion;" and if you follow his advice, and obtain such second opinion, the chances are a thousand to one that, if there have been anything in your case the least out of the common way, any feature that is not as well known as the first letter in the alphabet, that that *second* opinion will be—that the *first* opinion was *entirely wrong*, and your present illness has mainly arisen from the bungling attempts to cure the slight indisposition that alone afflicted you at the outset. Now, I never could make this out. Is it a fact, that even at this day medical science is at such a low stage, that a vast number of disorders are yet but little known, their symptoms unlearned, and consequently their treatment a matter yet to be discovered? Is it a fact, that unless any ailment be a fever, the small-pox, or the measles, or some similarly common disorder, that I may call in a dozen ordinary doctors, and may hear different views, and receive different treatment from each? Is it really the case, that there is either so much difficulty in deciding the true nature of certain diseases, or so much variance in opinion as to their proper management, that one doctor may prescribe the very reverse of another doctor? It is no uncommon thing to hear a person say, "Mr. Brown orders me to live low;" well, he lives low accordingly, and takes a mere nothing. You meet that same person soon after, at Brighton, and, to your amazement (bearing in mind Mr. Brown's directions), you find him amusing himself with mutton chops and bottled porter. And why? because Mr. Jones, his medical attendant in the new locality, declares that he must live well; and straightway he feeds like an alderman. Well, he gets no better, so he resolves to come to London and have the first advice. He comes, and visits Dr. Robinson, who unhesitatingly announces that both Jones and Brown have completely mistaken the case; that it really is a mercy that the patient has not died through their bungling; but he (Dr. R.) hopes, by *entirely changing* the plan of operations, that even yet the unfortunate individual, after a lengthened interval, may be restored to health.

This is a very unpleasant state of things; it is very disagreeable to think that my medical attendant may be as effectually preparing me for my coffin as though he were a hired assassin; and that my executors, *when the business shall have been completed*, will have to pay him a

handsome bill for killing me; and it does make one hesitate, if one be visited with any serious but not common malady, and one cannot afford the assistance of those more elevated professional men, who very seldom make mistakes, whether it were not better to let Nature alone and take one's chance.

Then (to increase our bewilderment) we have divers doctors who adhere to certain modes of treatment for all diseases, such as the hydropathic and homœopathic. The first, as we all know, attribute extraordinary virtues to cold water. They say, drink cold water, bathe in cold water, be wrapped in sheets saturated with cold water; always keep up a connexion with cold water in some way. It is to be hoped that, if the system be so beneficial, it is not so unpalatable as it would seem at first sight. The spectacle of an invalid lying wrapped in a great wet sheet on a frosty morning, and stimulating himself to endurance by copious draughts of water in which little bits of ice are floating, is *not* pleasant, and one hardly seems to care to try the system unless as a last resource. Then we have homœopathy, concerning which I must speak cautiously, for I know little about it; but in regard to the infinitesimal doses, and the giving as remedies those very things that in a healthy individual would induce the disease now sought to be cured, I own I must be viewed as somewhat incredulous. I am certainly sceptical as to the advantage homœopathy may bestow, and I believe that the merit of this system lies in its compelling its adherents to live carefully, to most rigidly observe the laws of Nature, and, in this way, I grant, to create for themselves a very excellent chance of restoration and recovery.

Now all this goes to the showing that we ought to have very clever men for doctors. Ordinary jog-trot, plodding individuals, who never would see anything for themselves, and who can hardly be made to see anything even when pointed out to them—these are not the men we want for physicians and surgeons. And we can quite dispense with West-end "exquisites," and gentlemen who are partial to the pulling off of knockers, making disturbances in theatres, and assaulting policemen. No man ought to be a doctor not possessing a very average, or something more than an average, share of ability. I grant you, a dull man may "get on" as a doctor, who would miserably fail as a barrister, and who should be (but is not, unfortunately, as yet) regarded as absolutely disqualified for the profession of the Church. Doctors' blunders are only occasionally discovered; and these blunders, as I have before said, seldom occur except in cases where the attendant is met by some feature that is more or less strange to him. The consequence is, that a man of pleasing appearance and address, who can say to his patients (especially the ladies) in the most gentlemanly manner a perfectly unlimited quantity of gentlemanlike things, and who has capital enough to take a nice house, in a good thoroughfare, and to place on his gate a bright brass plate, bearing his name at full length; and who, moreover, can keep a smart page, in a still smarter livery, the said page receiving strict injunctions to run breathless into the parish church every Sunday, and drag his master out of the most conspicuous place in the most conspicuous pew;—a man who can grasp all these points may do wonderfully well as a doctor, and may thrive like a sharp attorney, or a shrewd railway director.

I do not think, however, that a doctor's life can be a pleasant one.

Doubtless he gets used to its drawbacks, and they lose to him more or less of their disagreeable influence, but still, for it to be one's occupation day by day to go into and sit in close, darkened chambers, to gaze upon attenuated forms and wasted features; to feel pulses which indicate, mayhap, by their increasing feebleness, that they will beat but a little while longer; to listen to low moanings and bitter lamentation; to see the agonising fluctuations of hope and despair—oh! for this to be one's daily employment (and some cases presenting such painful aspects must always be under the charge of well-to-do medical men), is an idea one cannot make pleasing, even though one may struggle to remember, on the other hand, the gratification of often being the means of restoring to health, and the satisfaction of receiving for one's exertions large money recompense.

And there is another nuisance connected with the profession of a doctor, which might almost make a clever and anxious man drown himself in the water-butt. It is this. Say I am a medical man. I have been called in to a rather serious case. I have tended it for a long period with the utmost care; I have watched it with almost painful anxiety; I have employed upon it all my skill and acquirements, and at last I am rewarded. Having overcome many an obstacle, I am rejoiced to see clear and unmistakable signs of improvement; the disease has been in a great measure vanquished, and health is returning. The patient is recovering his spirits; his relatives, friends, and attendants are hopeful that he will soon be about again. I leave him, we will say, to-day, better than he has been yet; I begin to think he will hardly require my services much longer—the day after to-morrow, perhaps, I shall slacken in my attendance. Well, I go to-morrow, as usual, and the instant I knock the door is opened by a servant almost in tears. I go in, and straightway I am surrounded by a mob—a perfect mob of relatives, friends, attendants, sobbing hysterically. They are too overcome to answer my hurried inquiries, so, in alarm, I at once make my way to the sick man's chamber, and then, indeed, I see immediately that well might the mob weep, for here lies the sick man, not with every symptom of recovery as he appeared to me yesterday, but prostrate, stricken down, gone back again infinitely, astonishingly worse; so bad, that a very short examination tells me that the chances are now a thousand to one against his ultimate recovery. And oh! reader, if you knew the bitterness, the unutterable vexation, with which I subsequently learn that all this woful change, this miserable alteration has arisen purely and entirely from—what think you?—from there having been given to the patient, since yesterday, something that I had expressly forbidden as almost absolute poison; something that I had told the patient himself, told his friends, told his nurses, that he must NOT have in any case—and if you knew the increase of irritation caused by the unutterably stupid defence, that notwithstanding all I had said, they thought (as if they had the slightest right to think) that a little bit, "just a little bit" wouldn't hurt him, and so they gave it him—oh! if you could only conceive the overpowering emotions of indignation, disgust, contempt, and mortification which weigh me down at such a crisis, you would scarcely be surprised if you heard I had gone mad, and murdered patient, relatives, attendants, before I quitted the house.

And take another case. I am called in as a stranger; the people look doubtfully at me; they think, mayhap, I am too young for a doctor

(some persons think it impossible there can be wisdom anywhere except in an old head, and have a strange notion that clear symptoms of the approach of imbecility are undeniable evidences of excessive sageness); but, however, I am requested to exhibit my skill. I do my best, and my patient improves. But "patient" is a misnomer; he is one of the *im*-patient class; he seems to have an idea that a doctor should be a magician; that he should prescribe a dose which should at once effect a cure; and if there be only a gradual recovery, he is dissatisfied. The patient, moreover, not knowing anything at all about the human frame, either in health or disease, is not conscious that I can see great improvement, although his feelings or appearance may have undergone little or no change: and as he declines believing anything save what is evidence to him by his senses, this agreeable patient decides at once that he is no better, and that I have not done for him all that might have been done. Upon some pretext or other, therefore, I am got rid of, and there is called in, in all probability, a half or entire quack doctor, before whose awful eye, it is asserted, quails and vanishes every disease under the sun. Well, this empiric finds my patient's ailment under very peremptory orders of departure. I have, as it were, taken it by the shoulders, and got it half outside the door, and the door swinging-to will assuredly of itself complete the ejection. Now, the new doctor will most likely have the sense not to take any important step. He will be quite contented, in his ignorance, to let matters issue as they will. His professed remedies, therefore, will be utterly innocuous, at the same time that they will not work a fraction of good. But, reader—*but*, when the patient (thanks to my skill and assiduity—I say it boldly, thanks to my attentive watching and unwearied labour) finds himself, after a brief space (a brief space, after substituting for the dull plodder the clever quack), restored to health and strength—oh! how does that vile vagabond triumph!—how loudly does he claim a victory as much his as would be that of a man who should boast of having thrashed a noted pugilist, but who should not care to mention the trifling circumstance that he had set upon him only after another man had stunned him.

I have here incidentally mentioned quacks; quacks, however, of the higher class (if the distinction be not an absurdity), not the proper rascals who bring to fullest light the lamentable folly and weakness of human nature. Just a word regarding these. It is, I think, one of the most marvellous things possible, that people can be found so utterly weak and ridiculous as to credit for one instant a hundredth part of the monstrous assertions put forth in regard to certain quack medicines. Now, does anybody believe—is it possible that anybody in this land can believe—that a man afflicted with twenty ulcers in his leg—who has been ill for thirty years—who has suffered so much that he must be the most wonderful man ever heard of to have lived so long—and who, though he be but a poor man, living an immense way off, in some hamlet, the name of which has never reached the ears of any one, in London at all events, has nevertheless attracted so much attention from his most dismal and melancholy condition, that armies of doctors in country parts have marched to see him, and have had a firm fight with his several maladies, but have been worsted, and have retreated in despair—is it possible, I say, that anybody can credit that this poor, wretched, half-expiring creature, simply through following the

blessed advice of his dear friend Thomas Smith, of London, to take one box —just one box —of the celebrated Professor Cheatem's pills, and to use the tiniest quantity of his ointment, was only ten days after dancing the polka on the village green, and is now ready to wrestle anybody for half-a-crown! Oh, melancholy necessity! I must answer my own question, and say— "Yes, there are tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands, who will believe it."

There are, most certainly, many drawbacks to a doctor's comfort. It *is* very unpleasant to be called out of a warm bed on a frosty night to visit a gloomy sick chamber; to be fetched from the brilliant ball or snug evening party to attend a case of delirium tremens or typhus fever; to quit a scene of happiness and enjoyment for the sight of suffering and, mayhap, of death. One almost wonders that medical men can ever be merry. They must see so much that would make ordinary men sad, look so often upon countenances wherein they can behold, as clearly as though it were written with a pen, "The end is at hand,"—they must become so intimate with sights of pain and humiliation, that, I repeat, one almost marvels a doctor can ever smile. Yet they are not melancholy men. As a body, I should say they are cheerful and pleasant companions, loving amusement and good cheer. It is so, I suppose, with them as with other people—familiarity softens obnoxious features. It is an astonishing thing what a difference it makes when what is required to be done is a matter of "business." A man feels (and rightly so) that it will not do to ask inclination what she has to say upon the point; he crushes every emotion but that which prompts him to obey the call. And, in the case of the medical man (and thank God it is so), he will go in the middle of the night from his bed into the snow to the sick man to administer medicine; he will turn from his dinner to set a fractured limb; he will leave his church, he will leave anywhere, go anywhere, do anything, for the sake of the sufferer who appeals to him for aid.

It is a noble science is that of medicine. Sincerely do I wish that it were more thoroughly understood by the mass of its professors than, looking at the circumstances upon which I touched at the beginning, it would appear to be at this time. I believe that there are many men in the profession now whose opinions are really invaluable, whose learning, skill, and acuteness one cannot too much extol; but the mass of doctors are by no means so efficient as we could desire, and having regard to the danger of error on their part, as they ought to be! However, there is a good spirit abroad. The time will come when in this profession, as in others, the way will be cleared for clever men, and closed against stupids, and what a yell of mortification will go up from the grim demons of disease and misery as they behold the change!

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CURATE'S LIFE.

Part II.

"My name, sir, is Kate Howard. I was born and bred in Leicester, of which town my father was a respectable solicitor," said my companion of the previous evening, as we met by appointment, and turned into a neighbouring inn, to prevent interruption. And here, perchance, I may be allowed to digress, and chronicle my extreme pleasure at seeing a slight attempt for the better as regarded her dress with the assistance of the few shillings I had given her. The gaudy Kiss-me-quick bonnet had been exchanged for a neat straw cottage one, and the flaring-coloured Paisley shawl for a quiet tartan-patterned one—the Gordon Clan, to be very particular. "I lost my mother," she continued, "during my infancy; and though my father was ever kind and affectionate, and watched over me with a jealous care, still I was thrown in my youth more upon my own resources than many girls of my age; and at seventeen, innocent, artless, and light-hearted, I was more inexperienced in the world's deceits, snares, and perfidies, than I should have been had a mother's pure and tender care watched over me; and the ample world seemed to me infinitely good. It was during the autumn of this year that I accepted an invitation to visit a relation at Nottingham, during the week of that rather Saturnalian festival, Goose Fair. The amusements were at their height. Fun, frolic, and festivity run riot; cares and business were swamped; and the floodgates of good-humour, frivolity, and liberty, seemed to have been opened, and, like a mighty stream, to have deluged the town, until you could hardly have believed yourself in sober, staid England, but in the fair fields of *La belle France*, or those sultry climes 'famed for oranges and women.'

"As I have already said, every species of amusement was at its height—shows, booths, sights, theatres, and that recently-introduced amusement of dancing at the casinos. My cousin Mary had become acquainted with an officer then stationed at the barracks in the town, and we were to meet him, by appointment, at the ball-room one evening, where I was promised I should be introduced to his lieutenant, whom Mary portrayed, in all the bright tints fancy can paint, a 'perfect man.' Nor can I help the confession that, when we did meet, I was far from being disappointed. Lieutenant Boynton was a tall, handsome model of manly strength; his features regular and good, a musical voice, and a frank and honest expression of countenance, that drew strangers to his acquaintance. His mind was well stored with general information, and, although young in years, he had greatly profited by the experiences, the trials, and the views of life to which he had already been subjected; but, joining his regiment early in life, and associating with men who, however much they may worship honour and bravery in the abstract, unite them not with the sacred creeds of religion or the firmer principles of morality, until the standard of his right or wrong seemed to be the questionable dogmas of the mess-table.

"At the end of the week I left Nottingham for my home, and I know not whether I felt most joy or most pain; but, certain, I experienced

sensations for the first time to which, up to this period, I had been a perfect stranger. Could these be the first-fruits of love? was the question I often put to myself; and then I took to brooding over every word and every sentiment Mr. Boynton had poured into my willing ears. I thought over his 'honeyed words,' his converse, and opinions; and then a thousand little incidents, 'light as air,' mingled in the train—his vows in private, his contumely of me before his brother officers, as if he despised my acquaintance, and only sought it to satisfy some base and selfish desire, until my brain became so heated and perturbed, me fain thought it would burst the slender barrier of my mind, and hurl my soul into earthly darkness!

"It was during the following spring that a strike occurred among the lace-makers of Leicester, and the magistrates immediately decided upon applying for soldiers. Oh, sir, how my heart beat with mingled emotions as I saw the dragoons march up the street! The Riot Act was read; the officer formed up his men ready for action; the police captured two half-starved spinners, who had vowed to overthrow our dynasty, but who seemed better adapted for the destruction of a plate of beef than the English throne; and a couple of old drunken women had passed a few remarks and comments upon the obesity of the mayor and the valour of the soldiers in attacking 'old mothers,' when they were 'afflaid' to go to fight the blacks—evidently alluding to the Sikhs. A council of war was held, the peace of the town was decided not to be in such imminent danger but that the officer might fall back upon the dinner of the mayor, to which a party was invited to meet him, and the soldiers to their billets, to sing songs and drink the Queen's health. Although comparative quiet had been restored, still, as most wonderful stories were hourly propagated through every conceivable channel to the police, as the hunting-season was over, and the natural love of our nation for any new-painted plaything, whether it be a troop of dragoons or a General Tom Thumb, application was made through the lord-lieutenant to the military authorities that Leicester should remain for a couple of months or so a half-billet station; and Lord —— being a Tory, and that party then in power, the request was immediately complied with. As soon as the excitement of the 'strike' had subsided, our 'guide folk' turned to who and what the officers were who were quartered in our town; and you, sir, can better fancy than I depict, my varied emotions when I heard from my brother 'a Mr. Boynton' was one of the officers of the troop.

"Sir, I must be allowed to pass over the next six weeks of my existence; and oh! believe me to be sincere, when I swear I would suffer any torture, or undergo any sacrifice, to blot these few fleeting days out of the Book of Life, and obtain the forgiveness of my Maker for my deadly sin. Boynton was not long in finding out my father's house; in short, I believe my cousin had told him of it previous to his leaving Nottingham. We met. He lured me on, and I made excuses for my repeated absences from home, and deluded my kind father by trumped-up tales of "engagements in the country"—mean subterfuges for meeting Boynton and wandering in the shady lanes, or along the swardy sides of babbling brooks, while he poured forth his protestations, his vows, and the wily stratagems of love into my innocent breast, and taught me to value lightly those sacred tenets which had been early instilled into my mind by the heavenly light of the Gospel, and to find a ready excuse for my every action, until, by

subtle casuistry, I laid 'the flattering unction to my soul' that I did no wrong."

"Ah, my poor girl! man's frailty is the rock on which your sex's innocence is wrecked," I exclaimed. "But did not those divine words, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,' breathed forth in humble prayer night and morning, occur to your mind?—and did you not pray to their heavenly Author to grant you strength to withstand the assaults of evil, and shield you from temptation above what you could bear?"

"Alas! alas! sir, I did not. I was so led away by my selfish desires and frenzied love, that I forgot the Creator in the creature. I was ruined! —lost, body and soul! Betrayed, deceived, disgraced! Sunk in deadly sin ever past redemption!" the girl screamed, bursting into a paroxysm of grief.

"Hush! hush! Don't give way to your feelings, my poor girl," I said, hurt to a degree at her unfeigned sorrow. "Take comfort, for our blessed Saviour himself hath told us, 'Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'"

"But not grant forgiveness, sir?" she said, eagerly.

"Yes, and grant forgiveness, too, if you repent in sincerity and truth," I replied.

"Well, sir," she continued, after some pause, "one sunny summer morning, when all Nature was gay and bright in all its beauteous colours, and the woodland warblers chorussed forth their merriest song, I met Boynton. A gloom overshadowed his handsome brow, and he told me an *émeute* was shortly expected in Ireland; fresh troops were under orders for the counties of Munster, and he was to occupy W——n, a manufacturing station in the south of England, vacated by part of a regiment marching to Cahir. A thousand emotions, fears—nay, even distrust racked my troubled brains as the news fell from his lips; and I knew not why, but a shuddering presentiment foretold me that misery and sorrow were treading hard on the heels of my present happiness and love; and I almost feared my mind would not have withstood the shock the sight of his departure caused me, had not a wild flood of tears eased my overburdened heart. From the inn where they stopped for the first day's march Boynton wrote to me, and the note breathed of affection, and even with a faithful promise he would write again on his arrival at W——n. For weeks I heard not from him. I brooded over his heartlessness; I wandered along the walks where, whilom, in happier hours past, we had wandered, and read and re-read, and wept over the passages he had marked of his favourite poets, until I settled into a dark melancholy and ceaseless apathy.

"A month after his departure a second letter came. It was kind and affectionate, and by many an artless girl would have been highly prized; but the quick sensibility of my love pointed out here an odd word, and there a stray thought, that a tone of selfishness of his own lot at being planted down in a stupid quarter pervaded the whole, rather than a tenderness of feeling for the poor lost girl he had betrayed and ruined. My father for long, though happily ignorant of the cause, had observed my melancholy dejection; and as the simple pleasures and indulgences of our home had failed to rally me back to happiness, he proposed I should visit a relative at the sea-side. I hastily grasped at his wish, and a fortnight

after, with a heart bursting with guilt, and crushed at the thoughts of leaving those who had tended me from my childhood, I took a tender farewell of my parent, gave the few relics and baubles I had stored from childhood to my friends, and, with a desperate determination, I left Leicester, not for the sea-side, but where my heart only was, and that night joined Boynton at W——n. What might be the anxiety of those who expected me at the quiet watering-place, or the feelings of my father at my flight, you, sir, can as well picture as myself. A large reward, I saw by the *Times*, was offered for any information relative to me; but I had managed my disguises so well, and kept my intention so secret, that from that day to this not one word has ever been heard in Leicester of poor Kate Howard.

"Boynton was what is termed in a regiment 'a fast officer.' He kept five or six horses, spent a good sum on his personal appearance, and, moreover, bet and played heavily; and the natural consequences were, that he was deeply involved to the Jews. In short, as he used facetiously to remark—mess-table wit, you must allow—'that though the Duke of Wellington's frank would fetch 5*l*., his own stamped autograph would not, with two 0's attached to the 5.' Leon Solomon was in his confidence, and Ishijah Levi his bosom ally—the filthy, dirty fellow used to come and sit in his room and drink his brandy, and ogle me, and make his coarse remarks—so low will men stoop who are in difficulties! I spent two months in W——n, when, with the excuse of 'urgent family affairs,' Boynton left me for town. He was absent for some time, and taking up an old paper of the district, among 'the local information' I read 'that Lieutenant Boynton deeply regretted,' and the usual panegyric of a country newspaper, 'had exchanged to India.' I was so stunned and overcome by what I read, that I fell swooning on the floor; and when, some hours after, I regained my consciousness, I found myself laid out on the bed, and a stranger busying himself in the room. He was a young man, and, as I soon found out, had evidently basked in the sunshine of fortune, and but very slightly versed in the emotions and feelings of woman. Without the slightest attempt at palliation or softening, in a moment he told me Boynton had 'levanted'—'devilish hard up,' as he expressed it;—come down as his brother officer and friend to look after his 'kit;'—Hobson of the 4th had bought his first charger for a hundred and ten, and if he could get sixty or seventy for the other charger, that would pay his regimental debts—and what his clothes and appointments and furniture fetched, I was to have;—the horse-dealers had attached his hunters. And he finished by telling me Boynton was a trump, deeply regretted in the regiment, up to anything, and had let the Jews in for eight thousand pounds; which last feat seemed to afford the young gentleman unbounded delight. He told me he was to relieve Boynton; I was welcome, however, to the rooms for a couple of days or so; but as the colonel was coming to inspect them by the latter end of the week, I must move before that period. I left that night. The thousand reminiscences of the past happy hours, tainted though they had been by guilt, were too painful for me to linger long among the scenes which every moment opened afresh the bleeding wound!

"I walked along the river's edge, and watched the bubbling stream as it meandered along, turning in its course the busy factory, or foaming and hissing forth its white spray as it battled with the huge wheel. I watched the girls with their bright and merry faces, many of them

motherless and hungry, the children of poverty and indigence,—while I, the cherished favourite from my natal hour, my mother's dearest wish, my father's greatest thought, was bared and baned from happiness and love, deserted, lone, lost! without one single heart to feel a ray of pity for the repentant sinner in all her misery. I thought of him who made me so, and was mad. I thought again upon that last, sole, dearest link that bound me to this troubled world, ruthlessly broke asunder. I gazed on the rippling stream as it flowed along, and a frantic feeling made me wish to cast myself in headlong among the bubbling waters. Their gentle murmur seemed as my funeral dirge, and methought, as they would close around my head, my soul would gently glide into a lasting sleep; but then the thought of awaking—awaking in another world—crushed my heart, and, sick and blind, I fell on the grassy bank!

"I sought London, and, with the few pounds that were handed over to me from Boynton's effects, I took a small lodging, and endeavoured to eke out a livelihood by embroidery and fine sewing. Alas! sir, how futile the attempt! The causes of this failure have been lately so ably given to the world by a philanthropic sect, who are now turning their most strenuous exertions to the salvation of that portion of our sex, that it would be useless for me to discuss the subject further; suffice it to say, that the competition was so great, and the remuneration so small, that the wages would not keep soul and body together."

"Much as I have studied the subject, I am afraid our great and excellent philanthropists are far from discovering a cure, by either emigration or societies," I said. "London appears to be the modern *Sirenum Scopulos*, which attracts young girls to its precincts, and then leaves them to perish; for, I believe, in none of our large towns is female labour so badly paid as in our capital. In Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, and other towns, many girls earn from fifteen to eighteen shillings a week."

"Working from morning to night, sir, I do assure you, about sixpence to eightpence a day was the outside I could earn. However, to proceed. Among the acquaintances which my embroidery and sewing threw me, was a young girl who had once known far better days. Her father had become bound for a 'friend,' who evinced his friendship by levanting to America, leaving her father to meet the heavy bond. It ruined him. He was sold up, became a bankrupt, passed through the Insolvent Court, took to drinking, and died, leaving this poor girl and two brothers to fight their own way in the world. One of the girl's brothers had got an appointment as a musician in a theatrical band in S——y, and he wrote very pressingly that she should join him. Julia volunteered to go if I would accompany her. I acceded, sir, and we set off for the town. The manager of the Theatre Royal had been born under a lucky star. His mother was the old gin-bibing woman that sold oranges under the portico, and so suddenly disappeared when the future Roscius was about six years of age. The company pitied the poor fellow, and he earned a scanty livelihood by running messages, and bringing in the brandies-and-waters 'hot,' between the pieces, to the green-room, until he obtained the situation of 'call-boy.' Once fairly on the pedestal of preferment, he rose rapidly. He became the star of his circuit; and when one of his former patrons, now a starving, broken-down old man, wrote the mysterious, adventurous, awe-inspiring melodrama, and gave the future manager the leading cast—the good-natured ruffian of the piece—his for-

tune was made, and he was a man for evermore. His wife was a woman of a very strong turn of mind; she was partial to polonies and onions for breakfast, and not decidedly hostile to hot suppers and spirits. She had once played a *soubrette's* part before royalty—very likely, when George IV. went *incog.* to the Adelphi to see 'Tom and Jerry'—so she always prefaced every sentence with, 'When I played before the king.' She 'lorded' it pretty considerably over her *corps dramatique.* Every one, from her husband to the old woman that swept out the theatre, was under her nod and command;—all subservient, all slaves, every one and everything, save one—the green-eyed monster, Jealousy. He ruled her pretty considerably, and I was one of the inflictions he cast in her path. No sooner had she seen her husband and myself at rehearsal, than she at once decided I was a worthless, good-for-nothing baggage, and her husband the most faithless and the gayest of men. Poor woman, how grossly was she mistaken! The life of a country actress is about as dreary and drudging a one as ever women enter upon. To study hard; to be punctual at rehearsals and play; to labour over the same pieces night after night; to be funny at the same period, over and over again, when your heart is heavy; to be pathetic when you are wearied from work; to be away from home and friends; to bear the petty insults, sarcasms, and contumely of the company, or the jealousies of the sisterhood; to pronounce love faithfully to a gentle *Romeo* reeking from the taproom, or to clasp a *Claude Melnotte* to your arms redolent of tobacco and rum; to be ogled by every counterskipper in the pit, or to stand the double-barrelled glass of the old be-wigged *Roué* of the boxes, with his pencilled eyebrows and rouged cheeks, are some of the sufferings the poor daughters of Thalia have to undergo. These, then, sir, coupled with the unjust suspicions of the manageress, made me determine to leave 'the boards.' To trace my life from that period up to last night, when you found me houseless and a wanderer and an-hungered, would be to lay bare the pollution, the crime, and the remorse which, under a seeming beauty, our streets abound with;—facts too horrible to relate, sir, too corrupt to hear! I am what I am. I have erred and I have sinned; but, sir, has not our divine Preceptor himself told us, that we all being evil, and knowing how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give good things unto them that ask him?"

It was some time—two years perhaps—after the events I have just mentioned that I was instituted to a church in one of our large mercantile towns. During that interval, I am happy to say, I had effected a reconciliation between Kate Howard and her friends. The prodigal child had been received back into favour and forgiveness. It was one cold winterly night, and I was sitting over a good blazing fire, and congratulating myself that I was not exposed to the December inclemency of the weather, that a loud rap was heard at my front door, and my servant ushered in an old woman, white with snow and shivering with the cold.

"Plase yer honour, will you jist step over and see a poor gintlemin afore he dies?" said the woman, who was evidently a Roman Catholic, with an implicit belief in the extreme unction of the soul. "The docthor has given him up, yer honour. Faith, he almost said he wouldn't live over the night, and he wants the priest now."

"And pray who may you be?" I inquired.

"The widder Macarty, yer honour; a poor lone woman, who lets lodgings to gintlemin, and deals in fish and eggs," she replied, dropping a series of curtsies.

Accordingly I buttoned up my great coat, and manfully followed the widow along the dark back streets teeming with dirt, poverty, and pestilence, until I began to think I should lose myself in the maze of squalid alleys. About midway up one of the dirtiest, however, I espied in the glimmer a miserable, half-starved little girl, evidently on the look-out for our approach.

"Oh! oh! oh! missus! make haste!" she exclaimed, running to meet us; "the gentleman's quite parlous again. Horrid! he curses and swears—oh, scandalous!"

The girl's words made us quicken our steps, and, entering the old woman's house, I began scrambling up the "companion-ladder" style of staircase, at the risk of breaking my shins, if not my neck, and made towards the room whence proceeded the loud howls and oaths I heard. I pushed open the rickety door, when a sight which beggars description presented itself to my view, and never shall I forget that painful scene. On a pallet lay the living skeleton of what had once been a tall, handsome man, strapped down by thick cords to the bedstead; his struggles were furious, his paroxysms and convulsions terrible; and his screams and curses made my blood run cold, and I involuntarily exclaimed, "Has this man a soul?" His beautiful brown locks had been cut off, and were strewed about the room, while the stench was so horrible I could hardly breathe. I manifestly saw "his sand had nearly run." He turned his large glassy eyes upon me as he exclaimed,

"Ha! ha! ha!" It was as the subdued hissing of the serpent. "So hell has sent you with its torments, has it? Hiss! hiss! hiss! To hell back again, I say, monster! Physic! physic! Throw physic to the dogs!"

I fixed my eyes intently on his; I saw to a degree it had the desired effect. I watched him patiently for some time, and then gently loosed his cords.

"Thanks! thanks!" he exclaimed, with a hollow moan of anguish. "I am gentle now—gentle as the lamb. Inno—— No! no! no! not inno—— No! no! By Heaven I am not mad!" and, dropping his tone to a whisper, "nor *innocent!*"

"Repent of your former sins with real penitence—make your peace with that Judge in whose presence you will shortly stand. Be candid; confess yourself to Heaven—all—everything *speak*," I said, with a firmness I could with great difficulty command.

"Regrets! Faugh! mine is a deadly sin. Faugh! Away! away! *Away!* I say, tempter! Do you hear me? Away, then! Oh! oh! oh!" he exclaimed, with the scream of a maniac. "What is that? Heavens! what is that? It is her; it is—it is Kate. Oh, powers! she moves—she beckons—she smiles with scorn—she—she triumphs; ay, triumphs o'er a ruined, damned soul! Oh, sir, have mercy on me! Remove her! Kate, Kate, I love you still! indeed, indeed I do! Do you see nothing there, sir?"

"Nothing, on my honour."

"Nothing? Hush, sir—listen. Hear you not the scornful laugh?"

"No."

"No! Then it is the fancy, the coinage of my troubled brain. Then I am mad, sir—yes, mad!" he screamed; and then in gentle tones asked, "Knew you one fair girl—one gentle heart?—Kate Howard?"

"Kate Howard!" I exclaimed, in surprise. "I did."

"Behold in the loathsome wreck of humanity now dying before you her betrayer and her seducer! Leave me, sir. Curse me, sir, and let me die in torment!"

He then threw himself into frightful paroxysms of convulsions; he raved and swore, until his agony broke out at every pore. I watched by him for hours, and, at last, I saw the storm within had spent its fury, and minute by minute his distempered frame had gradually lulled into a quiet sleep. He slept for about forty minutes, when some noise below stairs awoke him, and with a start he turned his fine eyes upon me.

"Doctor ——," he said.

"Your pardon, sir, I am not the surgeon," I said. "The person below called me in to give ghostly aid to one at the point of death. You seem better now; my presence can, therefore, be dispensed with."

"No, no! don't go, for pity's sake. I have had such a delightful dream. Methought myself on a green verdant bank, with a babbling stream running at my feet, and the air perfumed with all the sweets of 'Araby the Blest.' Methought I heard a joyful hymn of seraphic angels, whose melodious strains were wafted by the gentle breeze to the throne on high! Tell me, sir, do you believe there is a repentance hereafter? Do you think that the crimes committed in the few fleeting years we are here on earth are to be atoned for by the eternal—eternal, I say—misery hereafter? Remember, sir, eternity is an indefinite space. We may mark thousands and millions and billions of years, but at the end of that course eternity will be no nearer its end than when they began; and oh, sir! tell me, are the sins and follies of twenty years to be atoned for by an everlasting, never-ending punishment?"

I was glad to see the sufferer in so good a frame of mind to receive the sacred truths of the Gospel dispensation. I argued with him deeply, and I found him a man of some thought and mind, and of no meagre ability. He had read, and what he had read had been to some purpose. He bore upon my arguments dispassionately. He talked calm and collected as one whose earlier years had not been neglected, and whose mind still bore the impress of religion. I urged on him the sacred duties of Christianity. He received them eagerly, and with humility and repentance. I pointed out to him the positive assurances of the efficacy and acceptance of prayer, as revealed by Divine authority, and he rejoiced and was at peace. Seeing him, therefore, in so favourable a state, I suggested that he should receive the healing rites of the holy Eucharist.

"Sir," he replied, "I am willing. But does not the rubric of our creed tell us that the sick person should be moved to make a special confession of his sins?"

"It does, if the sinner humbly and heartily desires it."

"I do, sir. Bear with me, then, a few minutes while I confess a sinful and a chequered life. I am now, sir, but eight-and-twenty years of age, a period called by many 'the prime of life,' and descended from an ancient family. With a prepossessing appearance, at twenty-one my father found

himself heir to a fine property in Yorkshire, and his own master. Young though that be, he had already plunged deep into the frivolity and corruption of the world, and was then a deep gamester, an experienced rake, and excessively expensive in his dress and habits. Deluded by false friends and flattered by courtezans, he soon dissipated his life-interest in his once splendid property. Shortly afterwards marrying my mother, a beautiful and richly-endowed heiress, he as quickly embarrassed her fortune, and, moreover, imbued her with like extravagant tastes, until nothing was left them but to flee the country and settle on the Continent. I was born—an only child—and spoilt, courted, and indulged. Brought up among the foibles and vices of the French capital, associating and caressed by the wits and *savants*, the actresses and gamblers of Paris, it cannot be supposed my youthful principles were very fixed, moral, or religious. I was sent to Eton, and spent my holidays with an old aunt, an excellent lady as regarded her own and her household's decorum, charitable to a proverb, and eminent in her religious love for Sunday schools, but wanting the vigour to subdue the ebullitions and faults of a schoolboy, and give a right colouring and direction to his character. At fifteen I returned to my parents abroad, where again I plunged into the excesses of Paris; and two years after joined our army, pretty well initiated in the experience and ways of the world, and with my natural happy disposition soon won the golden opinions of the whole regiment. Perchance, sir, in the shattered dying wreck now before you, you may trace the remains of some manly beauty. I believe, when a youth, my features inspired some little interest, or at least created a guilty sympathy in the breasts of many of the fairer sex, for my intrigues were numerous. I inherited the expensive habits of my father; and not being of age, and having no real security to offer, I had but the ruinous resource left of raising money of the Jews at usurious interest, until I found, at twenty-one, my debts were so numerous, and my father so involved, nothing remained but to join him in cutting off the entail of our property, and disposing of the estates, each reserving an annuity for himself.

"It was about this time, or soon after, that my regiment was ordered to Nottingham, where I met Kate Howard. The history of that unfortunate victim is too well known to you, and harrows up too painful and heart-rending feelings to myself, to require further allusion here. I did love her, sir, believe me, guilty and sinful though that passion be. Hush! did you not hear a whisper, sir? the clear hissing notes of 'deadly sin?' Is this sin deadly? Answer me, I pray you. Is there *no* repentance now?"

"Our Liturgy has placed your sin in that awful category," I replied. "Still, fervent repentance will avail much hereafter. The words you mention, however, were but a fancy of your fevered brain. I heard none."

"Sir, may not the spirit, when about to be freed from the grosser and embarrassing clog of matter, hold communion with the powers of a world unknown? Believe you not, sir, that the spirits of the immaterial sphere walk unseen in 'this working-day world' of ours?"

I was silent. I had no wish to enter into a controversy on the absurd speculations of his fanaticism; moreover, I thought his mind might wander, from the height of his fever, so, with an endeavour to divest his thoughts, I requested him to proceed with his story.

After a lengthened pause, he continued: "I shall make no further allusions to that poor girl. You say she is with her friends now, and as happy as her guilty conscience and fallen state will allow her. Thank Heaven for it! Well, sir! while stationed at W——, I found myself so near town, with all its delights and excitements, its gambling, and its Opera, until the Wragenphamish Club saw me oftener its denizen than the barracks of W——. I forestalled, then mortgaged, then sold my annuity. I was a ruined man. By great interest I effected an exchange into a regiment serving in India, and managed to be ordered out in a transport then 'under orders,' so that before the Jews, my creditors, knew that I had left London, I was steaming up the Channel. The tribes of Sikhs were in open revolt, and as soon as we landed I received orders to push forward by forced marches to the Punjab. After some severe travelling, I reached the camps of my regiment in the afternoon, and as a poor soldier, with both his legs carried off by a cannon-ball, was borne into the hospital, we heard that our forces had received a slight repulse. The anguish of that news to an officer within a mile or so of the battle can be better pictured than spoken. In the evening my regiment returned, and were under orders for the morrow. That night, as I lay stretched on the plain, I prayed fervently. I had long dropped correspondence with my family. I thought of that; I thought, too, of Kate perhaps starving and a beggar, and my only hope was that I might be slain in the battle, and my glorious end atone in some measure for a wasteful, wicked, selfish life. Early the battle began. I saw without a blanch or fear the poor fellows mowed down on all sides by the enemy's raking fire, and even envied their fate. I headed the skirmishers, and prayed a stray shot might end my life. We charged, and I rushed into the *mêlée*, and performed prodigies of valour for the hopes of death, but a predetermined destiny seemed to avert the fate; and instead of death, as victory crowned the British arms, I was complimented and promoted. The fate of Kate Howard preyed on my mind; she seemed ever present, ever hovering about my steps, ever whispering to my mind. To dispel the fancy, I took to deep play and drink, and soon found but one resource left me—to sell my commission. I did so, and returned to England a beggar. The heir to eight thousand a year—the once courted, favoured, happy Boynton—the man who has moved among the great and the highly born—*I*, who have lavished thousands on the bauble of a day or the luxury of a night, am here dying, with but a stranger to close my eyes, in a garret, on a truckle-bed!"

I prayed with him long and fervently, and administered to him the last rites of our church.

"Take this ring," said Boynton, pulling a brilliant off his finger, "and give it as my dying token to Kate Howard. Tell her to mortify herself for her past frailties, and perchance we may meet hereafter. Under the mattress are a few pounds, which will defray my funeral expenses and the rent of this room. There is a letter, too; enclose with it a lock of my hair, and send it to my mother. And now, my kind friend, good-by. I forgive all men, and trust I have made my peace with my Maker."

Mr. Boynton sunk into a quiet sleep, to awake in eternity. And if ever that dangerous expedient, a deathbed repentance, availeth to vouchsafe life to a penitent sinner, I verily believe his destiny would be a happy one.

THE SOLDIER ARTIST.

BY T. ROSCOE, ESQ.

I.

THE thunder of the battle had died away; the allies, once the scoff and scorn of fortune, were now victorious. Night, with her dark mantle, shrouded the living and the dead; and far beyond, the camp-fires of the enemy, tracked by the light of burning villages, threw their dun lurid glare round the horizon. That unearthly cry of the ravens, gathering to the death-feast, gave fresh horrors to the stilly night, startling the wounded and the sore-tired slumberers, stretched among the slain, as, with their anticipated knell, ere yet—no more.

Along all the roads to the French capital the plumed Hussars, and bands of fierce Cossacks, like howling wolves on the scent, hung upon the broken columns of the French. Those proud Imperial Guards, and that Light Cavalry, but now the terror of the world, galled to the heart, were reduced to cover defeat and flight, in the sight of Paris, before the horde of wild foemen. On—on they swept, bent upon death and plunder, giving no respite to the harassed foe through the long weary night.

Happy island—England, to have been exempted from scenes like these! For when day at length dawned, it was only to renewed strife and terror; for war is, indeed, a jealous mistress, and will exact from its victim-worshippers to the uttermost farthing. Suddenly the shout to arms—a fierce *mêlée* rose from a wood at some distance from the high-road. The French had prepared an ambuscade to arrest the allied progress, and the tide of battle was for a moment turned.

A Russian officer of rank, too eager in pursuit, was surrounded with part of his division; there seemed no alternative but surrender or death. With the blood in flame, heroism is no such wonderful thing as it is made to appear; the difficulty is rather to control it, and General Löwenstein decided to cut his way through the enemy or to perish. A few words to his hardy Russ sufficed—impassive courage is his idol—and he fought with the instinct of his own bears when driven at bay. They fell nobly, and their commander seemed about to share the common fate, when a Prussian squadron made its appearance on the enemy's flank. The officer at their head—we shall call him Lothar—threw his force with resistless impulse into the conflict. It speedily turned the scale—the enemy's first rank gave way, and the Russian was saved. But see, the fiery young liberator lies wounded under his horse.

Lothar was removed, insensible, into the nearest village, and orderlies were despatched by the grateful Russian for the first camp-surgeon who could be met with. Anxiously he watched every symptom of the wounded; and on the removal of his uniform, and the linen over the wound in his breast, casting an eager scrutinising glance, he uttered a momentary cry. His eye had met another object, hung by a gold chain round the neck, and resting close upon the wounded man's heart. It was the portrait of his own betrothed—he could not mistake it—of the Countess Marian herself!

With the surgeon had arrived one of the wounded officer's friends,

belonging to the same division, and who evinced the deepest emotion upon seeing the state he was in. Sadly and silently he watched the return of consciousness. "Adelbert!" at length murmured the officer, "are you here? What is all this?" Then suddenly aware of the truth, he added, "Remember me to Marian;" and he again closed his eyes.

The wound, however, was not mortal; the only fear in the mind of the surgeon was from the extreme loss of blood.

With his eyes still fixed upon the portrait, and at the name of Marian so tenderly breathed forth, the Russian appeared like a man lost in a maze. In vain he thought, and mused, and taxed his memory, to throw some light upon this strange and sudden revelation of some antecedents, as he dreaded, not of the most pleasant nature. How could his deliverer, whom he had never before seen, have come by the picture of *his* intended bride? It was evident how he loved her by the discovery of that portrait, no less than by his impassioned exclamation when taking, as he thought, a last farewell of the world. There, in one, he beheld his preserver and his rival. Assailed by new and opposite emotions, now he approached the sick man's side, now started back as if he had trodden upon a serpent.

Fixing his eye on him at length, the surgeon took him aside, recommending quiet for his patient, without which he could not, he said, answer for his life. With a calm benignity, strangely contrasting with his emotion, the Russian then silently beckoned the friend of Lothar to retire, and accompanied him.

"That noble fellow," he thus broke forth, "is my deliverer; if he die, it was to save me. I marvel not to witness your grief. It seems to me as if I had long loved him, so great is the interest he has awakened by his gallantry. He must be much esteemed by those——"

"By all," interrupted the friend, "whoever knew him, such is the nobleness, the generosity of his heart. Ah! he will be sadly missed by us all. What, then, will it be to one who loves with such idolatry as a woman must?"

The Russian made a movement, as if he were about to strike the speaker; then, mastering himself, he exclaimed, in a voice so loud as to bring the doctor again to his side,

"Has your friend ever travelled in Russia?"

Adelbert hesitated to reply.

"As you must be interested," at length he said, "in all that concerns your liberator, I may inform you of what I know. He *has* been in Russia—resided there some time."

"Yes; true!" exclaimed the Russian. "Now I have a distinct recollection of having seen him at Count Rostoff's. Oh! speak."

"Most likely," was the reply. "Would to God you had never seen him there!"

"For Heaven's sake, why? Go on—let me know all—the worst! Do not keep——"

It was now Adelbert's turn to express surprise; he looked at the general, as if for some explanation before he proceeded.

"You may safely confide in me, as time will, I hope, show," said the Russian. "Whatever my own sufferings, pray go on."

The noble air with which this was said satisfied Lothar's friend, and he pursued:

"Born with the finest genius, having received an excellent education,

full of fire, truth, and enthusiasm for nature, my friend embraced art as his profession—sculptor, painter, and architect; he resolved to commence and to push his career in Russia. His handsome person and winning manners were not without their influence on his fortune. He made the acquaintance of many noble families, with none, perhaps, so intimately as with that of the Rostoffs. Proprietors of palaces and estates without end, it was at Petersburgh that they first met the artist. As munificent patrons of the fine arts, they threw open to him all and every means of gratifying his tastes and studies which they could devise. Pleased, too, with his noble character and bearing, they invited him to their palace—mansion inferior only to the emperor's, and lavished upon him every mark of favour that could gratify youthful ambition. The Countess Marian, a young creature of rare beauty, full of real soul, of fine tastes and talent, and hardly seventeen, became one of his pupils. Her father was delighted with the rapid progress she made under so inspired and ardent a teacher. But, alas! there was other progress *she* was making, not strictly confined to enthusiasm for art, with her new master, which he little suspected. Were not the examples of St. Preux, and of Bürger, and so many more victims to circumstance, enough to put him on his guard? And such a gem to guard! as much more dangerous to mortal man than any Julia, as Lothar, I verily believe, is incomparably superior to either of the preceding characters mentioned. But what danger! Was not the splendid beauty already promised—betrothed to the only representative of a princely house?"

"It is true!" exclaimed the general, now deadly pale.

"And the artist was engaged to paint her portrait, to be sent to the then happy——"

"Go on!"

"Well! Could the pangs of Tantalus surpass his? He completed the task; and, with a noble courage, worthy all praise, fled—fled, with the arrow deep rankling in his heart. Yea, he sacrificed his divine art to seek a glorious death—love's victim—from the enemies of his country. Instead of death, he reaped only laurels—fresh laurels—though exposing himself, as you saw him to-day. I have observed this often: the great unhappy who seek death can never find it. Still, by his noble and benevolent actions, he seeks to mitigate the grief which he cannot remove—for the lady loves him!"

Again there was the same effort to repress his fierce emotion as the Russian replied,

"I trust that he will soon regain his peace of mind. He deserves to be happy; for, from the deep sorrow you evinced, I easily saw that he was a friend who merits all your esteem. He will soon, perhaps, learn to forget her."

"Never; it is not in his nature," replied Adelbert.

"Then his story is a very sad one," rejoined the stranger. "Pray assure him of my lasting gratitude, should he recover. Unhappily my division of the army is recalled: urgent business requires my presence elsewhere, but I leave him in good hands; present him with this ring, and it may be that we shall meet again."

He wrung the hand of Adelbert with evident emotion, and was gone.

In the jewel-case Adelbert also found a bank bill on Paris for a considerable amount, but the stranger had, to his surprise, left no address.

II.

THE war was ended, and the victorious allies retraced their steps to the now free homes of their respective countries. Napoleon was a name—a shadow!

The recovery of the soldier artist was slow, and the first sign he gave of returning health was to resume his art; his first work, another study from the portrait. But the same gloom hanging over him, his friend prevailed upon him to return to the vicinity of his native town, where he had himself a seat not many miles distant from the artist's abode. They saw each other daily; and Lothar took singular delight in witnessing the felicity of his friend, however mournful the contrast, and in wandering with that friend's children among the most picturesque spots, affording them gratuitous instruction, and continually presenting them with some beautiful specimens of his art.

Still he had neither health nor strength of will to master his feelings by strenuous devotion to his profession. Time flew, but the impression of former associations was indelible; nay, seemed to acquire fresh force.

More anxious for him than ever, Adelbert invited him to join in his festive parties. The gentle Emilia, his lovely wife, and even the children, exerted their utmost power to divert his deep-seated sorrow. But he would only consent to visit them at brief intervals. At length his friend one day proposed a hunting party to the great forest of Waldberg. It was a festive meeting, which was to continue for upwards of ten days. This he knew was a temptation not to be resisted; for Lothar was an admirable rider, had been passionately fond of field sports, and sought in them the same sort of wild excitement which he had already experienced in the battle-field.

"Then to horse!" cried his kind friend, exultingly; "let Emilia see how you can leap your famous Galla, the good Polish charger on which you achieved the Russian prince's rescue."

"Oh, I should enjoy it," cried the fair lady, "of all things; and to accompany you, too, if Adelbert will allow me."

"Yes, you shall escort us as far as the border-forest, dearest, but not a step farther."

"You think I am not brave enough," she replied, laughing; "you shall see."

So it was agreed that, on the first fine autumnal morning, they would all set out, Emilia submitting to confine her horsemanship to the circle of the Lady's Hunt. Lothar for the moment seemed to have resumed all his wonted soul and vigour. His fine person and handsome features appeared to great advantage; and he was no less admired for the rare skill and consummate boldness with which he led the chase. Far away in the dark deep shadows of the antique woods was heard his silver horn, and the loud baying of the dogs as they rushed on obedient to his voice, till they brought the fierce grizly wild boar to a stand.

Then commenced a deadly combat, which made Lothar for the time feel a momentary excitement, more joyous than he had done since the grand campaign, forgetting for a moment all but the animating scene before him. Several hounds had already bit the dust, and though none were near to aid him, the hunter spurred on his gallant Pole, hurled his spear with equal force and dexterity, and brought the grizly

monster to the ground. He threw himself from his horse to despatch his prey, a feat which had nearly cost him his life. Mad with pain, the wild boar rose, rushed on him, and, though met by the spear, pressed forward, and Lothar unclasped his knife. Not a dog came to his aid; but, on the beast's approach, the gallant steed, with the instinct of his forest race when beset by wolves, wheeled round, and gave the assailant a salutation which prostrated him in the dust. The hunter seized the advantage afforded him, and despatched his formidable foe ere he had time to regain his legs.

He was now in the heart of the Waldberg, and the lengthening shadows on the green slopes, and the radiant west illumining the hills beyond, and bathing wold, and rock, and tower in streams of fading fire, reminded him that it was time to rejoin his friends. Again he wound his silver horn, to which the mountain echoes alone replied. Then he gave his noble steed the rein, in the idea that he would retrace the forest-paths with a surer step than his own memory could supply. Yet it seemed as if for once even the instinct of his Podolian forest-race was at fault. The deepening evening gloom had yielded to the shades of night, and Lothar was still penetrating innumerable intricate paths, which his unwearying mettled charger pursued with unyielding confidence. All at once there burst on him a blaze of light, resplendent as that of a boreal aurora; and at the next break in the trees he opened upon a spacious and magnificent avenue, skirted with rows of time-honoured, majestic oaks, beeches, and lindens, forming one vast sylvan canopy above his head, and stretching into parallel groves and woodland on either side. It was as if some giant-hand, with a genius transcending that of a Telford or a Stevenson, had pierced straight through the mighty heart of the eternal woods, leaving the rest of that vast surrounding region to primeval solitude and night. What added to the strangeness and enchantment of the spectacle, the lordly castle which terminated the view was illuminated as if for some special festal occasion. Arches of triumph, festooned with flowers, long rows of lamps, and sounds of revelry met the astonished eyes and ears of Lothar as he proceeded.

Suddenly a forest-guide, arrayed in hunter's green, with spear, and dagger at his girdle, rode up at full speed, so as to startle the gallant Galla, and rouse his master to place himself in an attitude of defence.

"My lord! my lord!" exclaimed the eager courier to the now sad and jaded artist, lost in reverie, and deploring his disappointed love and ambition. "Hasten, my lord. The guests are long awaiting their host, and the archbishop himself has arrived."

"Alas, my friend," returned the wayfarer, "you mistake; your lord is not here. I am a poor artist—nay, I have lost even that name—ambition itself. You must go further to meet him whom you seek."

"Follow me, follow me!" were the only words uttered in reply, as the forest-guide turned his rein, and speeded towards the castle.

"Fool!" exclaimed the hunter. "Hear me! The man is mad. Or do I dream? I must have rest, however, for my gallant steed; for to-day, perhaps, I again owe my life to him." And he spurred on to overtake his guide.

This was no easy matter, for, as if to avoid further colloquy with so ungracious a lord, he flew at speed. Every step he went increased the artist's wonder. The village below the castle seemed all astir; there was

an universal jubilee, and deputations of old and young, in holiday attire, began to show themselves from the lawns and gardens as he drew nigh. A party of young maidens, bearing garlands, all dressed in white, danced before him, and showered roses on him as he passed through the grand arch.

"I wonder to whom this magnificent place belongs," thought the rider. "And this festivity; it is for the birth of a son and heir, I suppose. Can no one tell?"

"Welcome our noble lord, the Grand Master of the Horse!" was the only reply that met his ear.

As he entered the court-yard, the applauding throngs surrounded, as if to escort him into the castle. Men in livery advanced; the grooms took his directions for the brave steed, gladly extolling his many fine points, and lowly adding, "Yes, my lord," to his every other word. And there, on the top step to the hall, stood that fool and madman, the forest-guide, smiling to welcome him in. Now he should know, and rate him soundly. How had he dared thus to fool him, without stopping for any explanation?

III.

Nothing heeding his indignant looks, the guide led our hero, through a row of domestics, into a spacious dressing-room, where a valet at once made his appearance to ask his commands.

"Would my lord like to dress for dinner? The company have arrived."

Before he could answer, a little page popped his head suddenly in, with that quiet, serious look of business becoming his important station, observing,

"My lady, the countess, has sent me to say that she has nearly finished her toilet."

"Zounds!" exclaimed the artist, in a tone of perfect dismay; "we are getting on with a vengeance. The picture will soon be complete, and a pretty figure *I* shall cut when the murder is out. What shall I do?"

"I think you had better dress, my lord, with all due submission," interposed the valet.

"Let me first see who I am!" cried Lothar, going to a mirror to survey himself. He rubbed his forehead, and felt himself all over, to assure himself of his identity, or of his "lordship." "Which am I, I wonder? Do I look like a lord, my man, or a fool?"

"Oh, my lord," rejoined the man, with a suppressed smile, "the two are never mentioned together. A lord, my lord, does not require——"

"So much sense as other people, perhaps, you think. Come, that is honest, and you *shall* be my valet. Heigho! shall we dress?" exclaimed Lothar, in a drawling tone, affecting the character for a moment.

"By all means, my lord. The countess will be waiting, and perhaps she may not quite——"

"What, then, has she the devil of a temper? Not wait a moment!" he cried, humouring the jest, as he thought. "Then, zounds! we must teach her. She must wait for his lordship," he added, with dignity.

The valet smiled. This turned the current of his humour. "Come, sir," he cried, seizing the menial indignantly by the collar; "tell me whose castle this is, and whose you are."

"To whom should it belong?" replied the trembling valet, "but to your

lordship, and I am on board wages, your most humble servant. You are in your own house—your own room—and I am your poor Swiss valet, Jacques."

"Who said you were to be my valet, fool?"

"Your lordship's bride, the countess, my most gracious master; I trust to deserve her good opinion by my attentions to her lord."

"That is good. How kind of her and you. Who can be angry? Only just say, my good, kind, attentive Jacques, do I dream?"

"I don't know, my lord, I do myself sometimes. I dreamt that I was waiting on your lordship, and you said to the countess that I was so good a fellow, so very attentive, that you would never part with me."

"Ah! I see *you* know how to dream; but I have it now, my friend, without your information. I am in a madhouse."

"Why, it is rather so to-day, I must confess, all here are so overjoyed to see your lordship."

"That is better still. I am booked for good, then, I suppose?"

"I believe your lordship *is*—for the gold cup, everybody says, Spanker will be sure to win."

"What, have I a house, wife, valet, groom, coachman, brougham, and racers too?"

"An excellent stud!" said the valet, quite seriously.

"Then tell the coachman to drive round immediately—I am off to Oakdale." The house of his friend, Adelbert's residence.

The valet obeyed, muttering, however, as he went, "Whatever will the countess say?"

The bewildered Lothar threw himself with an air of perfect aristocratic *ennui*, for he was wearied with conjectures, upon a magnificent ottoman, to seek a moment's repose. While thus lost in reverie, he was suddenly awoke to fresh marvels by hearing the sound of music close to him. And what music! and then a voice—the same—the same air. "God in heaven! it is—it is—the Countess Marian! Ah, never let me awake out of such madness!"

As he spoke, the rustling of a curtain being drawn up behind him, he looked, and the sorcery was carried to its highest pitch of intoxicating power. He did not believe it. There, in a splendid saloon, sat his beloved pupil, hanging over a portrait she was copying—one of himself. Behind her stood her father—a truly noble-looking figure—Count Rostoff; and, not far from him, a middle-aged lady, with Grecian cast of features; and, beside her, a younger sister of the countess. There, too, he saw, one arm round her waist, looking into her bright eyes—(and the witch-power, as over all the rest, seemed wholly to possess him, only not at all of a demoniac kind)—who, who in heaven could it be? The guide in his hunter's dress, who had bid him to the castle: the whole group was one to charm the eye of a practised artist.

"Who has done this?—Where am I?—Why is it?" exclaimed the entranced Lothar. "I will know the truth, or perish. Speak!" And he ran as if about to seize the hunting-guide, who had now risen.

Throwing aside his forest garb quick as light, Prince Löwenstein, the Russian general—the man whose life he had saved—stood there, opening his arms to the astonished soldier artist. Ere they had embraced, the count came forward, leading that blushing pupil, his Marian—the very countess who had now completed her toilet. Gently releasing herself from his arms, she said, with an arch smile, "You made us wait, my

lord, but the countess must wait for his lordship. Yet, suppose I had had that d—l of a little temper you spoke of?"

It was evident that his lordship had been overheard, for he now bore a title, through the prince's interest, as grand master of the horse; and he at last threw himself, overwhelmed with love, at the sweet countess's feet. It was then his friend, Adelbert, one of the chief authors of this happy drama, came to his assistance, declaring that they ought all to ask his friend's pardon, though he thought he had himself played the part of the valet to admiration, and not to be surpassed even by that of the forest-guide of Prince Löwenstein.

The succession of strange surprises, however, fatigue, and want of food, with the hunt and battle of the boar, had proved too much for Lothar, and he added to the sentiment of the scene by fainting away. Upon again opening his eyes, in the fair countess's arms, he seemed as much at a loss as before.

"Is it true?—are we in Paradise?—are we really so blest, then?"

"Not yet, my beloved," whispered the lovely Marian. "But all our past bitter sorrow and suffering, I trust, will yet end on earth."

A cup or two of good episcopal wine, from the archbishop's own cellars, soon restored Lothar to his wonted health and vigour. There now arose a general appeal to that excellent ecclesiastic—gifted with the power of binding, if not of letting loose—to unite the happy sisters to their respective lovers, ere the polkas were yet called for. The prince, with rare magnanimity, and a rarer feeling of gratitude towards his deliverer, on finding how deeply the affections of the countess were pre-engaged, had transferred his own to the bosom of her younger sister, hardly less beautiful and accomplished.

Two nobler-looking, manly beings than the prince and the new lord of Reichenwald, as they stood forth to claim the hands—hearts were already gone—of their blooming young betrothed, are seldom seen. What added to the charm of the hour and the scene, was the grateful delight expressed by the prince at the achievement of his noble plan—for his good work it wholly was—by bringing the old count over to his views by the proud example of his own munificence. Lothar, on the other hand, declared that he had repaid him for many lives, in presenting him with so precious and long sighed-for a bride. With equal delicacy and grandeur of soul, he had even obviated any feeling of obligation on the part of Lothar, in the matter of conferring property, by settling the castle and domains upon the lady and her surviving children. A handsome dowry from the count, added to Prince Löwenstein's generosity, rendered their family equal in point of wealth and power to those of any of the neighbouring magnates. To overcome the prejudices of rank and birth had been to him a far more formidable task. Nor was even this effected without the imperial sanction to the marriage; for so great is the old Tartar and Russian pride of caste, and the dread of ignoble or serf-tainted blood, that such sanction was granted solely on the condition that the erring young people who had thus sinned against traditional honours and imperial etiquette should for ever reside out of the glorious land of the czars.

But this only gave a fresh zest to the glad, unbounded love of the now wedded hearts, who, in that intimate union of souls, so rarely meeting, found a never-failing source of ecstatic enjoyments, above all those of a mere conventional kind.

THE UNREVEALED SECRET OF TITUS.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

I.

Rome, depuis la mort d'Auguste, en proie à des tyrans lâches et cruels, tour-à-tour portés sur le trône et renversés par le meurtre, soupirait après la domination paisible d'un prince vertueux. Vespasien parvint à l'empire, et rendit aux Romains des jours de paix et de bonheur.

VIE DE VESPASIEN.

HISTORIANS unanimously agree in admitting that the Emperor Vespasian was, indeed, one of those godlike men who appear to be especially created for the felicity of those over whom they are destined, by a beneficent Providence, to reign, and who seem intended, by that same Providence, to re-establish the empires which have been shaken to their very foundations by the crimes and follies of their guilty and immoral predecessors. Hence, his death was generally bewailed; but the tears of anguish and regret which bedewed almost every eye in Rome at this fatal event, were quickly dissipated by the smiles of joy and gladness, at the encouraging certainty that, great and deplorable as such a loss undoubtedly was to the nation at large, still it was not irreparable; for that in Titus, his son and successor, each Roman would assuredly find all the virtues of the lamented Vespasian—all his noble qualities, all his valour, patriotism, and fidelity—all his desire for the advancement of his subjects, the aggrandizement of his kingdom; and that he would also prove as much the father as the monarch to every one living under his mild and considerate dominion.

Never once did the young emperor belie these sanguine anticipations—never once did he abuse the confidence reposed in him—never once did he disappoint the hopes of those who relied on him for succour—never once did he cause the most disaffected bosom to murmur that he WAS a king. He conciliated all dispositions, and reconciled all opinions, strenuously and conscientiously studying to fulfil the onerous duties imposed upon him by his high position, seeking solely the advantage of those dependent on him for comfort, regardless of his own peculiar ease; neither too arrogant not to seek advice, nor too self-sufficient not to follow it when obtained. One of his first acts on coming to the throne was to consult the famous philosopher, Apollonius Tyanes, on the art of good government, who simply answered, "Imitate your father." Titus did more—he surpassed him, and very far, in all that was great and liberal.

When, early in his reign, Rome was desolated by a fearful eruption of Mount Vesuvius, followed by the most decimating pestilence and awfully destructive incendiarism, Titus was most active in repairing the injury done to the country by the rivers of molten lava which flooded it, in providing becoming funeral rites for the dead, shelter for the houseless, sympathy for the sorrowing, and commiseration for all; showing himself, in these overwhelming calamities, as a second Providence, as truly the vicegerent of Heaven—neither slumbering nor sleeping so long as one of his impoverished subjects required assistance—one afflicted heart,

in his vast realm, needed consolation; being, as it were, ubiquious in his promptitude and anxiety to allay suffering, banish want, and restore health and cheerfulness; he was seen, almost at the same instant, at the bedside of pain, or beneath the lowly roof of poverty; and so universal were the thanks of the grateful, the prayers of the righteous, which followed his every footstep, that he could truly say, in the emphatic language of Job,

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Yet this so warmly blessed, this so devoutly prayed-for, this so reverentially-homaged monarch, this generous benefactor, this most adored Titus—he who obtained the glorious distinction of being acknowledged "the love and delight of the human species"—he who conferred unalloyed happiness on all around, was a stranger to happiness himself. Some secret cankerworm of grief was insidiously preying on the spring blossoms of his heart, and the oppressive weight of some undefinable, but most appalling fear, held down the aspiring spirit, and chilled the ardour of that fine ambition, glowing to achieve those deeds which shine in the glory of a chronicled and emblazoned future.

Titus, with a prescience almost superstitious, almost prophetic, felt secretly convinced that the absolute present was alone his—that for him would scarcely be a morrow—that the hour of doom was actually impending over him in the mid-career of his brilliant destiny; he was literally haunted by the spectral image of approaching death; and that painfully distressing thought depressed his soul and enervated his body, so as to render him incapable of enjoyment, unable to control his emotions, or appear, as was naturally expected of him, cheerful and happy on all occasions. So far from this, alas! to the disappointment of his devoted subjects, he frequently seemed to be the most melancholy and miserable amongst them; once especially, it is recorded, that in the very midst of a gorgeous spectacle, such as Rome only could exhibit in its most luxurious days, when he was "the observed of all observers, the cynosure of every eye," the idol of every heart, overpowered by the ever-recurring presentiment,—the transitoriness of this splendour, this admiration for HIM—he turned from the enchanting scene and WEPT. When, in a few short months afterwards, those sad forebodings were too truly realised, and he was extended on the bed of death, he could not conceal his regret at quitting the world so young, complaining bitterly at the inevitable decree which summoned him to ETERNITY, ere he had accomplished half the projects formed for TIME—fulfilled half the anticipations indulged in for earth, ere recalled to heaven; then raising his languid eyes above, and lifting up his enfeebled hands, in attestation of the truth of his dying assertion, he solemnly protested, that there was but one single act of his life of which he repented, but one single secret hidden in his bosom for the grave to receive unrevealed.

II.

And when ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation therefore is nigh. 21 St. Luke, v. 20.

BUT one single act to repent of in a life of one-and-forty years' duration! But ONE, how marvellous! But one for an absolute king to commit, for an expiring king to deplore.

Alas! alas! which of his meanest subjects could have made such a confession? Alas! alas! which of us can "lay the flattering unction to our souls" that we have only one crime to repent of, only one secret to conceal? Do we not sin daily and hourly? Does not a never-slumbering conscience incessantly importune us to ejaculate with fear and trembling, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions?" Yet Titus could protest that he had but once offended in the sight of Heaven, but once grieved the Holy Spirit of his Maker. And yet he was a king; sovereign of the gay, the dissipated, the immoral city of Rome; exposed to all its temptations; obedient to no will save his own; and at a time, too, when the passions allure and mislead the judgment, seduce the reason, and beguile the senses; when the candied lips of eloquence persuade that even abhorrent crimes show but as venial errors in princes, and sycophants aver that kings can do no wrong!

What, then, was this one tremendous act which disturbed the otherwise tranquil end of Rome's most virtuous, most heroic, most deplored emperor? What was the one single act which was too, TOO criminal to be declared? What was the one single secret consigned to the oblivion of the tomb? Was it the devastation which he had wrought on that Holy City; that Zion, which God loved; that Jerusalem, over which Christ wept; that earthly kingdom to which the blessed Jesus was triumphantly approaching, to fulfil his heavenly Father's will? unheeded then the glory which surrounded him; unregarded then the garments which carpeted his way, the palm-branches which strewed his path, the Hosannas which rent the skies. Absorbed in the sorrow which passes man's sorrow, in contemplating the doomed but yet smiling city, nestling in the loveliness of its overshadowing hills, he burst into tears, and soliloquised it in language which spoke to every heart, which still speaks to every heart, and will, until time shall be no more: "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not!" Did Titus, in the solemn hush of coming dissolution, when he was left to commune with the silence of his own heart, hear the echo of those pathetic lamentations resounding to its innermost depths, for the predicted destruction of his invincible but terribly scourging sword? Did he then remember with a shuddering remembrance that he had walked about Zion, that he had gone round her, marked well her bulwarks, considered her palaces, told the towers thereof; and that HE had razed all this grandeur to the ground, laid all this honour in the dust? Did he behold with the mind's eye, whose vision is so acute, the dazzlingly-white marble of the holy

temple of the Lord becoming clouded by the dense volumes of smoke issuing from it, ere the spiral flames burst simultaneously forth, with a red and fiery glare, to consume it for ever? Did he mentally exclaim, as, conscience-stricken, he reviewed the past and sickened at the false glory of the conqueror, "How has the fine gold become dim!" as it melted in the seven-times heated crucible of destruction, fused by the hands of the infuriated and infidel soldiery?

Did he hear, with a heart-piercing distinctness, the agonising screams of the tortured wretches, whom his plundering Roman army actually disembowelled, to recover the treasures, imagined to be swallowed by them.

Or, oh! horror of horrors, did he catch the even wilder, more frantic shrieks of that maniac mother—that unnatural fury—that barbarous monster—that delicately-nurtured lady—that once idolising and self-sacrificing woman, who, when the rapacious guards again invaded her dwelling, in search of that food they insisted on was concealed in it by her, with a white, wasted, but quaking hand, lifted off the massive silver cover from the richly-embossed gold salver, and bade them, with a mocking hysterical laugh, partake of her hospitality,—revealing, to their horrified and startled gaze, the remnant of a child; her own, her only child—killed by her, cooked by her, and partly devoured by her?

Did he, in those last brief but eventful moments, when all the past sweeps over the brain with the impetuous rapidity of a swollen torrent's force, recal the predictions of the prophet—predictions verified by his violence and atrocity?

"The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst."

"The young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them."

"They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets; and they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills."

Oh! did he, when turning with loathing and disgust from the far-sought dainties profusely heaped around him to tempt the appetite, whose healthful relish was for ever lost, bethink him of those famished and despairing creatures who tore the offal from the mouths of their wives and infants—who, regardless of affection or ceremony, nay, even common decency, too fearfully found the truth of Isaiah's prophecy—"And he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm?"

Was this the ONE single act to be repented of ere he could die? Was the sorrow for this most awful siege, this wide-spread desolation, the ONE single secret to be buried with him in the tongueless sepulchre?

Did he feel, with that deep contrition which alone worketh out repentance, that he mourned "Because the ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate, her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness?"

This was enough to delay the spirit's flight, pausing in the very dread of that retribution which awaited it beyond the clouds.

III.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

GRAY.

WAS, then, the downfal of Jerusalem the one dire act—the one great secret of the dying emperor? or did the fainting soul of Titus dissolve beneath a more tender, a more affecting recollection—a more softening anguish than even the agony endured for those miserable Israelites?

Did the remembrance of his beautiful, his adoring Berenice flash across his aching brain? Did he then recal her affection—her constancy—her cruel banishment—HER sacrificed felicity—HIS own sacrificed happiness?

Surely, surely, when the pride of place yielded to natural feelings, and the heart WOULD be heard, the plaintive wail of the dove of blighted but never-dying love arose mournfully on the ear, and blent in unison with the sad reverberations of the chilling midnight winds, breathing a tone melancholy as the requiem-chant of the dead!

Surely, surely, when the gorgeous sun of earthly grandeur was fast setting; when the dim twilight of cold reality was fast stealing over the grey horizon, perceptibly darkening into the obscurity of intensest gloom; when the KING was forgotten, and the MAN alone remembered; man, with all his fond and frail dependencies; his cravings for sympathy; his reliance on others; his helplessness of self; his yearning of spirit; for the spirit-love only bestowed by woman; he must have bethought him of the gentle being who would have so soothed, so alleviated the pangs of that final hour; he must have sighed for her radiant presence; longed to bask in her beaming eye; fainted to hear her melodious voice, whispering to his lonely heart the words of spontaneous devotion, the prayer for his peace, the vow of eternal remembrance!

Surely, surely, he must have felt—felt with all the poignancy of that regret which, when utterly hopeless, is so much more acute—that if it be possible to live without woman's tenderness and reciprocity in the bright and vigorous day of ambition; in the flush of pride; in the turmoil and intrigue of state; in the height of splendour, and the intoxication of power; it is impossible to die without such beatific consolation, when, in the night of suffering, the brightness has vanished from the overshadowed heavens; when the frame is enfeebled, the mind rendered inert, by the long and mortal struggles it has at last been prostrated by; when the effort to raise even one finger to gain a kingdom is too exhausting; when that kingdom would be disdained, if thus easily obtained; when the ambition so trusted in is found a deception, and the station, which claimed imperative obedience from all, is found an empty form; when the soul's strength, hope, and piety are discovered to have been expended on a false idol; and when only the truth which teaches man's NOTHINGNESS is held of any account; then, when his dying gaze rested on the frigid and repulsive countenances of the time-serving courtiers assembled round his bed, with every hard-lined feature tutored to obsequious adulation and simulated commiseration, he must have turned from their stony looks to that sweet face enshrined within his heart, and,

covering his eyes from all outward and treacherous things, communed with his most sincere, most beloved, betrothed, and lamented bride!

Surely, surely, in those silent, those almost sacred musings, he must have marvelled at his stoical fortitude; his callous firmness in resisting her tears, in resisting her supplications;—the tears, the supplications of her, who, for five years, he had daily beheld, and only the more to love and admire; of her, whom it had become a daily necessity to behold; of her, for whom a thousand times a day he thanked the gods!

Surely, surely, he must have recollected the ecstasy of that daily intercourse, the agony it cost to resign it;—the pathetic acknowledgment of that agony, when urged by his dissatisfied ministers to part with all that made life desirable to him, the despairing agony she suffered in that inexorable decree.

TITUS.

Je me suis fait un plaisir nécessaire
De la voir chaque jour, de l'aimer, de lui plaire.
J'ai fait plus,
J'ai pour elle cent fois rendu graces aux dieux,
D'avoir choisi mon père au fond de l'Idumée,
D'avoir rangé sous lui l'Orient et l'armée,
Oh ciel! puis-je le declarer?
Pour jamais je vais m'en séparer.
Elle passe ses jours, Paulin, sans rien prétendre,
Que quelque heure à me voir, et le reste à m'attendre;
Encor, si quelque fois, un peu moins assidu
Je passe le moment où je suis attendu,
Je la revois bientôt de pleurs toute trempée:
Ma main à les sécher est long-temps occupée.
Enfin, tout ce qu'amour a de nœuds plus puissants,
Doux reproches, transports, sans cesse renaissants,
Soin de plaire sans art, crainte toujours nouvelle,
Beauté, gloire, vertu, je trouve tout en elle.
Depuis cinq ans entiers chaque jour je la vois
Et crois toujours la voir pour la première fois.

BÉRÉNICE.

Un soupir, un regard, un mot de votre bouche,
Voilà l'ambition d'un cœur comme le mien:
Voyez-moi plus souvent, et ne me donnez rien.
Ce cœur après huit jours n'a-t-il rien à me dire?
Mais parliez-vous de moi quand je vous ai surpris?
Dans vos secrets discours étois-je interessée,
Seigneur? étois-je au moins présente à la pensée?

TITUS.

Hélas! que vous me déchirez!

BÉRÉNICE.

Vous êtes empereur Seigneur, et vous pleurez!

TITUS.

Madame, après tout, me croyez-vous indigne
De laisser un exemple à la postérité;
Qui sans de grand efforts ne puisse être imité?

BÉRÉNICE.

Non, je crois tout facile à votre barbarie:
Je vous crois digne, ingrat! de m'arracher la vie.

TITUS.

Non; je suis un barbare:
Moi-même je me hais. Neron tant détesté,
N'a point à cet excès poussé sa cruauté.

Surely, surely, he felt, when too, too late to redeem the fatal error, that he had bartered the priceless pearl of the one true heart, which would have clung to him in weal and woe the same, for the tinsel imitation that glitters on the puppet-brow of stage-dignified majesty! Yet if with the magic wand of the enchantress, Creusa, he could have summoned the still most adored, most regretted Berenice from the shades of oblivion,—if she could suddenly have appeared at his earnest objuration,—would Titus have been able to recognise in the worn and wasted form, in the pale and anxious face, the beauty he so much admired—the woman he so much deplored? Years had passed since they had been mercilessly torn asunder by state policy,—YEARS! yet, oh! the awful ravages wrought by one single day of real intense woe in the human frame! Some, through it, have grown grey in a night; some, through it, have become idiotic in an hour; the raven tresses have blanched instantaneously, not with the slowly-advancing snows of many winters of age, but prematurely, in the summer's prime of youth, from anguish; the high and lofty mind sank prone into the abyss of despair by one mortal stroke, as the oak of the forest falls, in its fullest foliage, beneath the blast of the lightning's scathing flash. Grief does not often kill; the heart too rarely breaks with its down-weighing blow, but it withers gradually away; it is blighted, and only waits a sad season to perish entirely!

The expanding blossom, nipped by the early frost, still lingers on the parent-tree for a while, blackening and shrivelling beneath that very sun-ray which would have matured it to perfection but for that timeless injury; and so with the heart—the heart of woman especially; so with the heart of the forsaken Berenice,—it hung for a while, like that fading blossom, on the tree of Hope, awaiting for the quickening ray of repentant love to revivify it; but as time stole on, and brought only disappointment, it died with all the other frail and lovely things that deck the grave of AUTUMN.

And Titus died—died, without ever beholding her again; died, without revealing the mystery which so embittered death. Doubtless, he knew that they should meet again in those happy realms where there is no more separation; and so he bore it inviolate to heaven, to tell to Berenice alone, as an atonement for the cruelty which had destroyed them both. Whichever was the one single act, the one single secret of the young and valiant emperor, can never now be known; the above sketch of his too prematurely-ended life details the two most remarkable incidents in it; whether, then, it was remorse for the horrors he beheld and occasioned in overthrowing Jerusalem, or contrition for the banishment of her he never ceased to love, must be left to vague and fruitless conjecture. The humane and reflective will trust most piously that it was the former; the romantic and inexperienced will hope, with all the blind belief of hope, that it was the latter.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter X.

The first whom I encountered on reaching my hotel was Ippolito. His joy at my return was as great as if I had been absent for years. He had heard of my arrest; the intelligence, indeed, had diffused itself over the city. The countess, on hearing the news, was, no doubt, alarmed lest, as my companion, she, too, might be implicated in an affair thus grave, and had left Parma precipitately, as was supposed to make good her retreat, for Bologna.

The next morning I resumed my journey, with Ippolito, towards Milan, scarcely knowing my object in proceeding, yet unwilling to return. The events of the night had saddened my temper; I seemed to be struggling onwards to the attainment of some object distant and undefined, and the further I advanced the more did my difficulties increase. At every step of my progress I encountered new impediments, and, instead of seeing as I once had seen, a halo of glory in the horizon, all things seemed real; death itself enforcing its unlaureled brow on my mental sight as the sole end of ambition. Already my fame had spread over the republic of letters, but the homage which in earlier life I had pined for, had lost its charm; it was now within my reach, but the excitement was over; the means had absorbed within itself the end, and the one being exhausted, the other shared its fate. The pleasures of life were extinct, and though revived in pain, they still proved only mortal! Alas! the excitable nature of man is soon benumbed; its first bright ecstasies vanish like morning! The sober mood, the philosophic hour, refuse their simple blessing to him who sails over the troubled waves of passion in pursuit of a too lofty content; such a one is destined ever to wander—ever to look afar. He communes not with the day, but the morrow; earth contains not sufficient beauty to please! Thus the intellect, become too refined to endure attainable things, mourns after unembodied perfection;—betrayed by the ideal, and preferring, in its high estrangement, the works of Phidias to those of God!

In such a nature pleasure and youth disappear together, and a past-penetrating reflection succeeds. The joyous old hours arranged in melancholy array are viewed but as classical recollections of what once seemed lasting. The lights of memory are out, the eye turns away from the picture.

Though joy has departed for ever, excitement may still be found among the elements of pain, which it is the care of the sensualist to adapt to the cravings of a perverted nature. At first the pernicious qualities of the poison are met by gradual adoption, and a grateful substitute for pleasure is gained, one which is too soon found to possess most fascinating powers. But this abuse of nature leads inevitably to ruin! Great is the sacrifice which it necessitates! When the charmed potion has sucked up all that is holy and exalted in the soul, and the dried-up bed of what was

not mortal cries aloud for one more sip of the elixir of immortality, how little between this and death remains to revive the glow! The insertion of the stiletto's point, the sight of blood, the thought of self-destruction, dreadful as they are, will at last cease to arouse the feelings, and suicide itself is only left as a means of exciting emotion. It succeeds, and the last awful pleasure which it awakens crowns the history of a wretched being!

These were my reflections as the white heads of the Apennines melted gradually from view, and were succeeded in the moving landscape by the Alps. Then appeared the rapid flood of Eridanus, and at the distant termination of the plain was Piacenza. The scene rapidly shifted; next the town drew near, its distant beauty resolved into the tame reality which everywhere marks the haunts of men. We entered its rugged streets, and continued our journey amid rice-fields, irrigated by numerous canals, and enclosed with hedges of willow. The narrow waters reflected a calmly-descending twilight, forming a bright contrast with the face of nature. We reached Lodi before night.

While yet in my chamber, seated alone before a blazing hearth, and unwilling to retire to rest, my thoughts ran rapidly over late events, and impressed me with a clear conviction that new troubles were at hand. I dwelt chiefly on Giuditta; her beauty, owing to my neglect, had been exposed during sickness to a ruffian's gaze. I had seduced her soul; and as if Nature desired to avenge herself on me by being fully wronged, the sister had flung her sacred body into my arms, Æthra, sacred to virtue and to Marsino. I had willed the first crime; its sequel was spontaneous. And what was to happen next? Other recent misfortunes had occurred independently of my will, and were greater, especially as relating to my sister's death, than those which I had invoked. This truth hung over me in terror; heretofore I had practised my science at leisure, not suspecting that I was establishing precedents for doom, and that I was to be visited, in peaceable moments, with unlooked for evils. I felt myself unsafe; I longed to resist this tyranny; but, alas! where were my arms; and how could mortal oppose the enactments of fate? While thus madly arguing within myself I suddenly believed that I was endowed with defensive powers sufficient; I bethought me of my origin, and felt more than ever that I could anticipate events, and that with a degree of certainty which my forefathers would have deemed prophetic. All created beings which are designed by nature to become a prey to each other, are provided with the means of escape; one has swiftness given it to elude its pursuers; it is light of foot, or swift of wing; the other is encased in natural armour, or else supplied with the talon, or the forked tongue; and all, if but on their guard, may evade the greedy law of nature—that life shall live on life.

I was not ordained, then, to become a lawful prey to evil, without having been first endowed with the means of defence. But the law, as affecting me, was high in the scale of effect and cause; my weapons were spiritual, consisting in that penetrating vision, which is called prophetic, from its power of regarding the future. Having discovered this, and felt its truth, it was not difficult to believe once more that the germs of prescience had existed in me from my childhood. I had been under the operation of it at the time when a sense of future greatness urged me to

seek distinction; and what was manifested in my aspirations then, was confirmed in my later triumphs.

But is there no faculty of the prophetic kind that can reach the warnings which issue from the past? That period, like the future, has an interest in the affairs of time, difficult to fathom and impossible to predict. I could often see the future through the present; but the past is obsolete. I had no clue to its resurrectionary movements, as the history of that night taught me too plainly.

While seated in my chamber, and gazing on an old armchair, I was surprised, indeed horrified to find it occupied by the tremendous being who had presided over the infernal Inquisition. There were fixed his dim-orbed eyes, and there his terrible features; and he sat with the tranquillity of one who was in solitude, and as unconscious of external things, and of me, as if his nature were meditative alone. There sat the monster in reflection, and his thoughts seemed dangerous to my peace. He moved not, but was as still as a landscape. I addressed him in a whisper, with no effect; I called to him, and was unanswered; I drew near him with my sword, and tried even to probe him with my weapon, but its point penetrated only an airy phantom. I rose, and, with forced courage, seated myself on the chair of the spectre. I met with no resistance when seated in my new place; however, I found him still before me in possession of the chair I had vacated, and still in deepest thought. Stricken with terror, I turned round to avoid the gloomy spectacle of a pensive fiend, whose thoughts were, perhaps, on themes no less than the destruction of theocracy, whose hopes were atheistic, but whose belief was the same as that of apostles and saints. I moved, but he was before me yet; and, by turns, every corner of the chamber contained his thoughtful and appalling figure.

At length I grew accustomed to his presence. No change ensued in his aspect, no sign of outward consciousness. His sole object, as respected me, was to be visible. I asked him several questions, some in a satirical, some in a familiar tone, hoping to move him into conversation, or banish his presence.

"Art thou not tired," said I, "of thy mode of life? Thou hast now been at the head of thy degraded administration for ages, thwarted in all thy schemes by superior powers, thy glory perpetually eclipsed, thy plots exposed, thy reputation blasted, thy name despised, and still, for the love of dishonourable distinction, clinging to what seems power—the power only of inciting thy opponents to successful resistance—and all to confer the fleeting benefits of iniquity, if any there be, on the fallen satellites which surround thy throne. Verily there is greatness in thy endurance, for who, except thyself, is insensible to contempt? Thy companions give thee praise; but thou, who couldst deign to assume the serpent's dress in order to seduce a woman——"

At these words he started, and the form of Giuditta sprang up in his place before my eyes, holding in her arms the infant Sorrow. O! my God! felt I not wretched, more tired than ever of existence, when I thought of the base position I occupied in thy world! No other refuge, except retirement, was open to my choice. My solitary castle, or the monastic life, either would have afforded me shelter from temptation. Into the depths, then, of seclusion should I have sunk! But the pious sentiment

thus inspired was unavailing; I had lived too long; the monotony of peace was too terrible for a moment's consideration. Onward would I go with one hope left—to recover the lost Adora!

Chapter XI.

I soon reached the city of Milan. It is a strange fact, and one worthy of notice, that I could not set about performing any office until I felt that the right time was come. There are men who find occupation for every hour; but these are the patrons of detail, whose acts are fast forgotten. It is different when principles only occupy the mind: then days may be passed in apparent negligence, while the mental process is proceeding apace, and the object is advanced by the aid of time alone. Where the necessity to act is urgent, the feelings are enlivened; but where a result is to be determined by the course of events, these prepare the way to success without human effort.

Adora, like myself, was journeying on. She had started first. I need not hurry; the time must come when I should overtake her, and my future success in the pursuit seemed to acquire dignity by delay. And, respecting Marsino, he might be eager for news of his countess; but what had I to say? Again, I felt no hurry; the time might come when I should be obliged to explain all matters to him: but let that arrive in the ordinary course of things.

Under these influences, I one morning sallied forth into the streets, and told Ippolito to follow me to the cathedral, within whose precincts I desired to inspect the sarcophagus of Gian-Giacomo de' Medici, a work by Michael Angelo. While standing in front of the unfinished edifice, and surveying its vast proportions, I was addressed by a messenger, and presented with a packet. On bursting the seal, I found myself in possession of a challenge from the Count di Marsino. He proposed to meet me at the Forum within an hour, and added, that he should then be ready to receive any explanation of my late conduct. How I dreaded the encounter! Having inquired the distance to the Forum, I sent a verbal acceptance of the challenge, and, entering the cathedral, awaited Ippolito's arrival at the sarcophagus of Gian-Giacomo.

It was not long ere the youth arrived. I dismissed him to the inn for my daggers, and told him to follow me to the Forum, towards which I then leisurely pursued my way.

"Am I overtaken at this distance?" thought I. "Is Orazio to be thus avenged? Does Destiny thus indirectly challenge her rivals?"

Though the day was bright, it was cold and ungenial. The Alpine wind by turns whispered and howled in a strain of dismal foreboding. I believed myself to have fallen within the mesh of Doom! "But is she," thought I, "infallible?" I endeavoured to analyse her meaning, and, on considering her source, I found that, however potent, her utmost power rose only out of a preponderance of adverse events, and that she might be thwarted by intelligent beings, like myself, able to resolve her forces, and avoid the awful impression of her presence. But though I might triumph, my feelings brought with them warnings of so dark a kind, that I trembled for more than the result of the coming combat. Beyond it all

was mystery, and, in the darkness which enveloped me, some inevitable evil, if not death itself, lay concealed.

Ippolito overtook me, and delivered up my weapons with looks of sorrow. We proceeded together to the proposed place of meeting. The Count of Marsino was there, attended by another. We saluted each other, and proceeded to a field close at hand, and, reaching a group of acacia and tulip-trees, we halted.

"This is the time for thee to explain thy conduct towards my family, or to die!" exclaimed Marsino. And he drew his sword.

Seeing that I maintained silence, my antagonist started from his tranquil posture, and, expressing victory in every limb, commenced the attack. His activity and courage threw me instantly on my defence, and I long retained the advantage over my opponent. My anger, which had been suddenly roused, subsided as we fought, and left behind it a cool, determined resolution to conquer. More than once I could have pierced my opponent, but resisted the temptation, in order to obtain my triumph only after a hard conflict. I reflected as I fought, still deeming myself opposed to Doom. I cared not for victory until, after sparing his life repeatedly, Marsino should at length sink under the weight of his destiny. With this insane feeling I suddenly sacrificed every advantage, and ceased to fight.

"Marsino," I called out, "thy time is come, and, if thou hast no request to make, or no fond message to thy kindred, prepare thy thoughts to die."

He was deeply offended at my address, and sprang at me with the fierceness of a savage. I beat his sword from his grasp, and made a sign to him with my own to resume his weapon. The feat I had performed was victory, but the struggle was not over. The pride of my adversary was too great; he would not stoop for his sword, but must pursue the contest breast to breast. "It was thus," thought I, "that Orazio demeaned himself. Fate approves the precedent. Does she adopt it to avenge my brother's fall, or to encourage me? This steel slew Orazio, this arm directed the blow; and even thus do I offer up Marsino as another victim!" Saying this, I communicated a fatal impulse to my dagger; the point entered; the Count di Marsino fell, and, drawing his cloak around him, gathered himself unto his fathers.

My prospects were for a moment brightened, but I subdued my triumph in the presence of the dead. I felt regret, indeed, and whispered the sacred word, that "He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

To Ippolito I said, "Depart, my child, and I will return home alone. Leave me to my meditations." And to the friend of the dead my only word was, "Farewell!"

I wandered from the field in sadness: the preservation of my life was no boon to me—I had numbered another with the dead. It no longer seemed to me that I had conquered fate, but rather that I was in the hands of that irresistible power who had betrayed me to the lord of my late companion. What would be Æthra's emotion when she heard of her husband's death and the name of his destroyer? Yet, what did that signify—was there not another name who must hear that I carried at my side a bloody hand? Could I not, for her sake, have remained spotless:

I had seen her image in the caverns before Orazio's death; and now had I committed another crime in the presence of him who, in purity of heart, and in face, was another Adora!

"O Marsino!" thought I, "hadst thou been a thinker, instead of an actor, in the events of time; hadst thou anatomised the impulse which hurried thee into this snare of death, an impulse which seemed natural and just, thou hadst seen that mortals may escape with credit and honour that self-immolation into which they are often blindly hurried by passion. But thy heart was of that spongelike texture which can swell only with pride. Was thy blood too pure to irrigate the broad expanse of reason; was there nobility and honour only in the flood of anger? It is true that emotion, while it lasts, seems just and incapable of deceiving; it is true that its instalment gives the soul a sense of power before which all nature seems to quake, and man appears truly punishable. Alas! that it should be too late for thee to learn."

My thoughts next reverting to the Inquisition, brought Thanatos to my mind in colours most diabolical. Could he have pursued his hatred to Milan, and armed Marsino against me? It could be no other. I had inflicted a mortal wound in his vanity, and on my death he sought a cure. For vengeance has medicinal power; it removes the disease of hatred; it repairs the hurts of vanity and pride, where forgiveness has no virtue, and philosophy is unknown.

While thus troubled in mind, I was struck to the ground by a sharp blow with a stiletto. I felt the hot blood flow down my back, and my senses were dimmed by the cold chill of death: ere long I was deprived of consciousness. When I think of the condition in which I existed, I seem to gain some knowledge by negative means of the state of death. Sleep is a condition which is understood when over, for when consciousness slumbers life proceeds in its office and preserves its impressions—at the waking hour the soul knows that she has slept. So when the sleep of death thus comes and goes, we learn something of the tomb.

I was discovered, and conveyed to an inn in the Forum. The insensibility of my frame continued; my wounds were examined, and deemed mortal, and I was given up for dead. The people were allowed to enter the apartment in the hope that some one might identify the body; crowds came and departed; I was unknown to all. It was about the hour of twilight when I awoke from this apparent sleep of death, feeling as well acquainted with the dull silence of the grave, as in better days I had been with the sweets of slumber. Through my eyelashes I saw a dense crowd round me. I opened my eyes widely; I beheld Thanatos; he was in the act of examining my face! All started back; I pointed out my mortal enemy, and whispered, "He is the murderer!"

My eyes closed again, I heard some one cry,—a miracle; a scuffle ensued. Relapsing, I heard no more.

For days I continued in a state of unconsciousness, except at moments when roused by thirst, and the torture of my wounds. The first person I saw when my eyes met the light again was Ippolito. I smiled on him, and pressed his hand approvingly; his eyes swam in tears of affection and delight to find that at last there were symptoms of recovery, and that in the first moments of returning life I was sensible of his vigilance.

During a period of several weeks I lay feeble as a child, and at the

mercy of all mankind. Let the fanatic swear that evil is dominant in the world; let misanthropes denounce their species; but, judging by myself, I would maintain that benevolence is diffused through the earth. It is more equally distributed than riches, for all men share nearly alike, and thence it seldom surprises by its greatness or splendour. But it exists in every dwelling, it dwells in every breast; and though sometimes hoarded instead of being spent; though sometimes put out at usury by the miser of good that its fruits may return, it circulates through empires like the money of the land, and protects the sick and wounded in times of trouble.

This truth I learned on a bed of pain, and to this hour it has never been forgotten. Yes, it pleased the Arbitrator of my lot to notice me in my affliction; to teach me sound doctrines in the hour of sickness, which I remembered when I was sick again. Though, in the candour of my confessions, I relate the vilest acts and the most revolutionary doctrines; though oftentimes the fiendish joy, which in other days I felt in doing wrong, starts into expression, and seems still to linger round the memory of crime, I have changed for the better, and am ever changing!

I called not the shaven priest to my bedside, for I loved not the class which owns not love for woman, and boasts not paternal ties. Nature is dried up in the heart of priests; the glow of affection cherishes not that soil; the tear irrigates it not; the seed-time never comes; there is no harvest; but life is like a river flowing without an ebb through a sandy desert into the cold ocean of eternity. No, I summoned not the priest. When I prayed I addressed my supplication to the Priest who is on high; not in sentences which need translation ere obtruded on the all-harmonious ear, but in thought, which is in itself immortal, and is the language of the Trinity and the hosts of heaven.

Start not at my boldness, but be content to hear. All that I have conceived and done must be recorded; all that can be elicited from the mind, that fountain of all nature's types, must be preserved; for the period will arrive for One to weigh all facts, and all ideas; then will all truth be proved. Not on earth alone, which is so small a portion of the whole! Every star is inhabited, intellect pervades the systems, the mysteries of each world are to be separately solved, and, as the mental powers get larger, and are evolved under novel forms, sympathy is to be extended, and worlds will have to learn the truth of worlds. The earths all have their historians. Time is the recorder of all. To collect truths, to weigh them in scales, to decide their import, to write it on his scintillating brow, that finally the eyes of man may decipher the wondrous inscription—such is the work of Time.

In this vast system I have been, indeed, a mean actor, but it is not in himself that man must glory, but in his relation to the whole.

FLORENCE HAMILTON.

BY MISS JULIA ADDISON.

[This Tale, commenced several months ago, has been unavoidably interrupted, but will henceforth be regularly continued until completion.—Ed.]

Chapter VI.

The dinner was very splendid; good spirits and gaiety seemed to prevail amongst the company: the archers talked over their various feats, and every one seemed inclined to please and be pleased, except Sir Robert Craven, who, as he sat at table surrounded by every luxury, was silent, sullen, and evidently ill at ease.

Florence was next to him, and good-naturedly addressed him several times, but he answered even her abruptly, and seemed to have no wish to converse.

Florence, disgusted with his unamiable temper and manners, soon ceased to take any notice of him, and in the conversation of Wentworth, who was seated on the other side of her, before long forgot even the presence of the sulky baronet.

In the mean time, Craven's dislike to, and jealousy of, Wentworth increased every moment.

"To see how that fellow takes the lead in the conversation," he soliloquised, "and how every one listens to and admires him! And above all, what business has he to talk so much to Florence? Who is he, I wonder? A haughty upstart, of whom no one knows anything, and who yet bears himself as if he were a lord at least. Then the confounded coolness and self-possession which he maintains on every occasion! It was an unlucky day when he and I first came in contact."

These feelings were not softened by observing that Wentworth's talents and intellectual powers, which were of the highest order, seemed to be fully appreciated by the assembled guests, among whom were many eminent for refined and cultivated taste, and many severally distinguished in science, literature, and art.

When the ladies retired to the drawing-room, they could speak of nothing but Captain Wentworth. All praised him with enthusiasm; all joined in admiration of his handsome person, his brilliant conversation, and fascinating manners, excepting one, who had been the object of his especial attention, and she stood, silent and thoughtful, at some distance from any of the lively groups.

"Florence," said Lady Louisa Tufton, advancing towards her, "you are now as perfect a personification of 'Il Penseroso,' as you were a little while since of 'L'Allegro.' But I cannot allow you to be melancholy amidst

The joyous revel, and gay festive scene,

as Mr. Silverdale says, in his last poem."

Florence smiled, and, as she joined in the sportive conversation going on around her, endeavoured to forget the disagreeable subject which had just before occupied her mind.

This subject was her guardian's earnest wish for her union with Sir

Robert Craven, whom it seemed to her she had never disliked so much as to-night, when he was contrasted with a man so superior to any one she had ever seen before.

"He has told Lady Seagrove that he loves me," she said to herself. "Had he but an amiable temper and estimable character, however disagreeable he might be in other respects, I could—at least I think I could—make the sacrifice; but as it is, I feel that I had rather die than consent to a marriage with him."

Chapter VII.

Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame;
Their level life is but a smould'ring fire.

Goldsmith.

Silverdale and Pemberton were among the first to join the ladies in the drawing-room. A discussion was being carried on as to the advantages and disadvantages of solitude, and the opinions of the new comers were asked.

"To me," said Pemberton, "there is nothing so horrible as feeling solitary anywhere, or at any time, and I deem it a great misfortune ever to be alone for many hours together."

"What!" exclaimed Silverdale, "when you are surrounded with

Hedge-row elms, and hillocks green;

with

Babbling brooks, and silver streaming floods;

with

Hills and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires?"

"Charming," said Pemberton. "When I go into the country to ruralise entirely by myself, I am always delighted with solitude for a week or so, but after that I begin to want music, and literature, and society."

"Well," rejoined Silverdale, "is there not the music of the spheres? cannot you find

Books in the running brooks,

or

Hold high converse with the mighty dead?"

"I would rather hear the music of the Italian Opera than that of the spheres," said Pemberton; "and if you give me a good novel, you may keep all the books you can find in the running brooks. As to the mighty dead, they are delightful when one is studious, now and then; but, in general, I own that the converse of the intellectual living pleases me better. I believe that many people rave about the charms of the country, and abuse London, because they think it sounds sentimental and uncommonplace."

"But, Mr. Pemberton," said Lady Louisa Tufton, "you generally pass half the year in the country yourself."

"I do. But pray understand that none of my observations apply to a place like this, where the charms of woods and lawns are combined with delightful society, and which is also in the immediate vicinity of a

large and important town. No one can like this better than I do; it's your dismal, lonely, world's end places that I detest; where the grass grows up in the roads, where the nearest neighbours live five miles apart, and where a strange carriage passing through the village excites surprise."

"You give a droll description," said the poet; "but I will answer for it, you do not speak from experience."

"Indeed," said Pemberton, "I was a whole long week last summer at exactly such a place as I describe. I can appeal to Miss Hamilton to corroborate my statements, for, if I mistake not, she has also been in the neighbourhood of Witsbourne, of which place a cousin of mine has the living."

"Yes, I have had that misfortune," said Florence, smiling, "and never in my life did I spend so dull a fortnight."

"My cousin," resumed Pemberton, "had invited me so often, that I could refuse no longer, though I dreaded the visit extremely, and I found the reality worse than my worst anticipations. I did my best, too, to be delighted, and set out the very day I arrived to take a three hours' walk alone."

"And where did your footsteps lead you?" inquired Lady Louisa, who affected poetic phraseology.

"Why, my footsteps led me, for my inclination certainly did not, down a lane most truly called 'Long-lane,' and I walked on, and on, and on, without coming to a turning, or seeing a building or a human being, till I began to consider seriously whether the days of enchantment had not returned, and I, spell-bound, condemned to wander on for ever in the same unvarying track."

"However, you found that the lane had an end?"

"I suppose it had, though I did not stay to investigate, but, striking out of the road, made my way through a hedge, reckless of brambles and briars, and over dreary-looking marshy fields, bounded by an eternal succession of hedges and ditches, on to a desolate common, where one might be murdered fifty times over without any living creature, except some dozen geese and two or three half-starved donkeys, being any the wiser. I retraced my steps with a depression of spirits such as I never experienced before, and I trust may never experience again. It was the utmost I could do to prevent myself from committing suicide."

"Pray," asked Lady Seagrove, "how do the Witsbourne ladies contrive to fill up their time?"

"My cousin's wife," said Pemberton, "passes her days in cutting out baby's frocks and pinafores, and giving away broth and medicine, and coals and clothing, and tracts and gruel; keeping accounts of sick clubs, friendly societies, parochial lending libraries, and penny savings-banks; and superintending national, infant, and Sunday schools."

"Well, Mr. Pemberton," said Miss Craven, "could she be better employed?"

"Certainly not. But after she has devoted eight or ten hours a day to these occupations, surely that is enough, and she ought to have a little music, or society, or amusement; but there are no such things at or near Witsbourne. The only way in which she can now employ her musical talents is in teaching the infants at the infant school to sing psalms and hymns and multiplication tables."

"Were you fortunate enough," asked Florence, "to see a specimen of Witsbourne society, such as it is?"

"Yes. We went a distance of eight miles, to the house of a family, my cousin's best neighbours, who invited us to go and dine with them in a 'friendly way.' Now, to me, there is nothing in life more stupid than visiting in a friendly way. When people don't want to take the least trouble to amuse you, or to ask a soul worth meeting to meet you, they invite you to come in a 'friendly way,' which I cannot help thinking very *un*friendly."

"I suppose," said Lady Louisa, "the young ladies are very slow?"

"Dreadfully slow," said Pemberton; "but what can you expect when they associate only with the most *borné* intellects, and never have the opportunity of acquiring a new idea?"

"But you speak as if the inhabitants of a retired village must necessarily be *borné;* as if it were impossible for them to have a fine taste for literature and the arts; or capacities and intellects of a high order," said Mr. Silverdale.

"And surely it is so," observed Florence, "for by constantly living in a remote country place, and eternally associating with the same set of people, the mind degenerates, and becomes incapable of feeling or understanding anything beyond the common routine of every-day affairs, just as much as it enlarges and improves by an extended acquaintance with and knowledge of the world and society in general. The people of Witsbourne, for example, would much rather hear any commonplace ballad, no matter its being a little out of time and a good deal out of tune, than one of Grisi's or Mario's finest solos; and will listen to the most indifferently-played waltz or polka with attention, whilst a fine performer, exerting all his talents and energies in executing Weber's 'Concert Stück,' or Thalberg's 'Mosé in Egitto,' would not be able to hear himself for the Babel of tongues which would immediately ensue."

"It is true," said Wentworth, who had entered during the last part of this conversation, "that many such places as Witsbourne are still to be found; but when we consider that a few centuries ago half England was little, if at all, more civilised, it seems not unreasonable to expect that a hundred years hence there will not be a single spot in our land, however remote, shut out from the progress of enlightenment and reform."

Chapter VIII.

I am invisible,
And I will overhear their conference.—*Tempest.*

As Miss Trimmer was going up-stairs to make some slight alteration to her dress previous to the ball, it happened that in threading her way through a labyrinth of passages, she lost herself, and came out into a long dark gallery situated in a part of the house but seldom used. She had not gone far, when her attention was attracted by the sound of voices; and looking in the direction whence they proceeded, she could just discern Lady Louisa Tufton standing in a recess with her handkerchief to her eyes, and her back towards Mr. Silverdale, who was trying in vain to make her attend to him.

Being curious to know what was the matter, Miss Trimmer concealed herself quickly within the folds of an old crimson curtain which hung most

conveniently near the recess, and looked through a rent in the damask at the objects of her curiosity.

"Oh! could bitter tears avail me,
Then would my heart's fount o'erflow!"

she heard Mr. Silverdale exclaim. "At least, you might tell me my offence."

"To pretend not to know it is worse than all," said Lady Louisa. "I came here to weep alone. Why did you follow me?"

"Because I could not bear your displeasure.

Oh! too lovely, too unkind!
If my lips no credit find,
Pierce my breast, my heart shall prove——"

He paused abruptly, then resumed, "Really you make me the most wretched of mortals. Upon my honour I know not how I have offended you."

"Not know!" repeated Lady Louisa. "Have you not the whole day slighted me for Miss Hamilton? It is useless to deny it. You had eyes or ears for no one else."

"Indeed!—indeed you mistake," stammered the poet, rather confused. "I was struck with her beauty—remember, this is the first time I have ever seen her—nothing more. I love—I will never love but you, unless you drive me from you by your unkindness."

"I do not believe you," said Lady Louisa, sulkily. "I have long doubted whether you love me as I ought to be loved, and now I am sure of it. You really make me repent that I ever listened to your protestations of affection."

"If you go on thus you will make me repent that I ever uttered them," said the poet, as a change came over his countenance and manner. "I will not be always

To bitter scorn a sacrifice;

nor

Adore a creature, and, devout in vain,
Win in return an answer of disdain.

Some day, perhaps sooner than you think, you will find that I take you at your word."

Lady Louisa started at this speech, or, rather, at the manner in which it was uttered.

"A little while ago," continued the poet, "you desired me to leave you. You shall be obeyed."

He turned to depart.

"Stay!" exclaimed Lady Louisa, seized with sudden contrition. "I forgive you with all my heart—I did not mean to be unkind. Cynthius, dear Cynthius——"

She burst into tears. Silverdale hesitated a moment; the next he was kneeling at her feet. Before long he drew her to the low couch that went round the recess, and the reconciled lovers sat down side by side.

"Dear Louisa," murmured the poet, "as my heroine, Tofania, says in the first scene of the second act of my tragedy,

Does not
One hour, one blissful hour like this,
Passed in sweet converse, compensate
For agonising ages of soul-rending wretchedness?"

There was a pause, and then Lady Louisa exclaimed,

"Hush! do you not hear that rustling?"

"'Tis but

The breath of gently whispering winds,

sweet one," said Mr. Silverdale, in a rhapsody of love and poetry.

"No, no," said his companion, turning pale, and drawing nearer to him. Look at that curtain; I thought I saw it move!"

"My dearest creature, do not be afraid," said the poet. "Danger cannot

Approach you—no,
'Tis safety to be near thee sure, and thus
To clasp perfection."

He suited the action to the words.

"There! look now where I point," whispered Lady Louisa. "I would not for the world that any one overheard our conversation. Did you not see the curtain move then?"

"I could almost think I did," said her lover. "I will give it a good shake."

On hearing this, Miss Trimmer, who had been absorbed in the scene, became greatly frightened. She repressed a scream with difficulty, and, making her way out of her hiding-place, crept along close to the wall. In a few moments she heard Silverdale say, as he shook the drapery,

"You see there is nothing, dearest Louisa. Shall we go?"

Shrinking back again, in an agony of fear lest she should be discovered, the listener again sheltered herself in the curtain, and the lovers passed close by without observing her. As the sound of their retreating footsteps died away, she once more emerged, but, entangling her foot in the damask, fell with great violence on the floor.

In terror lest Silverdale and Lady Louisa should not be out of hearing, and return to see what the noise was, she lay still for some moments. On rising, she presented a deplorable figure. Her delicate pink muslin robe was torn and tumbled, the flowers were shaken out of her dishevelled hair, and one of her arms was severely bruised. Her face looked pale, and she trembled all over.

"And for what," she said to herself, as she stood before a looking-glass in Miss Craven's dressing-room, "have I incurred all this pain and fright and discomfort? It will be a good while before I take the trouble of listening to private conversation again."

But a few minutes afterwards, when she had re-arranged her dress, applied Eau de Cologne to her injured elbow, and recovered from her alarm, her soliloquies were of a different character.

"I should indeed despise myself," she thought, "if such a trifling accident could deter me from so useful and amusing a practice. No, I ought rather to be encouraged at the good fortune which preserved me from discovery, and consider it as a favourable omen of the success of more daring manœuvres."

Thus musing, with a smiling face she sought the dancing-room.

The ball passed off with spirit, though not much to the satisfaction of the host, who, though he led off Florence in the first dance, having requested her hand a week before, had the mortification to perceive that during the whole evening Wentworth was her favourite partner; and with feelings of ill-repressed anger and resentment, heard them more than

once called the handsomest couple in the room. When, disregarding his aunt's request that he would conduct the Dowager Vicountess of Swellington to supper, to which he answered rudely that he was not going to bore himself with old women with rouged cheeks and red-velvet gowns, and that the Dowager Vicountess of Swellington, and all the other dowager vicountesses in the world, might go to a certain individual, not mentioned in polite society, for what he cared—when, disregarding her entreaties, he hurried through the rooms in search of Florence, and found her leaning on Wentworth's arm, and proceeding with him to the supper-room, his displeasure and ill-humour knew no bounds; and he vowed to find out, if possible, some means of annoying his rival, as he considered Wentworth, and to make Florence repent her partiality for him.

Chapter IX.

While blooming youth and gay delight
Sit on thy rosy cheek confest.

Prior.

"I am sorry to hear," said Lady Seagrove, a week after the archery-meeting, "that poor Captain Wentworth has been suffering considerably from the effects of the wound he got in defending you and Florence."

"It thtrikth me," said Miss Trimmer, whom she addressed, "that very probably he egtherted himthelf too muth at the archery-meeting, thooting all the morning, and danthing all the evening. Florenth, you thouldn't have let him danth tho muth. I think you mutht have danthed with him thickth or theven timth!"

Florence replied that she did not feel herself called on to advise Captain Wentworth as to how much he ought to dance, and that he probably would not have attended to her if she had.

"I was thinking," resumed Lady Seagrove, "of inviting him to spend a week here, when he is well enough. We can do no less, I think. Bring me my note-case, Wilhelmina; I will write the letter immediately."

She accordingly despatched a kind and friendly invitation, which the young man accepted with much pleasure; and two or three days afterwards found himself on his road to Seagrove Hall.

As he came within sight of the noble-looking mansion, rising amidst stately woods and fine park-like scenery, our hero slackened his horse's pace, that he might gaze at and admire the beauty of the view.

He thought of Florence Hamilton, and wondered whether he should find her as agreeable at home as she appeared in society.

"Many beautiful girls," he said to himself, "are charming in a ball-room—and in a ball-room alone; but I shall be greatly surprised and disappointed if this is the case with Florence. However, it is impossible to tell beforehand. I shall have a good opportunity of judging. At all events, it will be extreme pleasure to see her face and hear her voice again."

When Wentworth entered the drawing-room, he found no one there but a little girl about nine years old, whom he remembered to have seen with Florence at the archery-meeting. She was sitting in an armchair, with one arm round the neck of a large black spaniel, and a book in the other hand, which she was reading intently. She raised her head, and shook back the golden curls that nearly covered her face, to look at Wentworth; and then starting up, ran forward to meet him, asking if he recollected her.

Wentworth, who was fond of children, talked with the little girl, and admired her favourite.

"Look here," said the child; "I will show you my dog's picture, which Florence has just done for me. Is it not pretty?"

Wentworth praised the drawing, and the little girl added,

"Even Sir Robert Craven likes that, and he seldom seems to care for pictures."

Lady Seagrove and Florence now entered the room. The former received Wentworth with much kindness and courtesy, and Florence did not disguise her pleasure at seeing him again.

When he returned to the drawing-room, after dressing for dinner, he found Florence alone. She had a drawing in her hand, which, on his approach, she hastily replaced on the table, with its face downwards.

"I have seen one of your drawings this morning," said Wentworth, "which pleased me so much, that I am desirous of seeing further specimens."

"I will fetch my portfolio," said Florence, rising.

"May I look at that one before you?"

Florence coloured, and did not reply; and Wentworth, observing her embarrassment, changed the subject. But Florence uncovered the drawing, and moved towards him Sir Robert Craven's portrait.

"I congratulate you on having made such an excellent likeness, Miss Hamilton," said Wentworth, rather coldly.

"It is not my doing," said Florence, eagerly. "Sir Robert has just sent it for us to look at."

"Does Captain Wentworth think the portrait a good one?" asked Lady Seagrove, who now entered with Miss Trimmer. "You will be sorry to hear, Florence, that the original cannot dine here to-day."

Wentworth watched Florence's countenance as Lady Seagrove spoke, and observed that she looked down, while the colour in her cheeks deepened. Dinner, however, was at this moment announced, and no more was said on the subject.

After dinner the party walked in the garden, and on their return to the house Florence sung and played.

Her voice, a rich mezzo-soprano, was beautiful and highly cultivated, and she possessed not only great taste, but a thorough knowledge of music. The song she selected was not one of those requiring mere flexibility of voice and brilliancy of execution, but one which called for pathos and deep feeling; and her singing did justice to the composition.

Wentworth listened to her with delight. With a fine ear, and a mind formed to understand the highest and most intellectual order of music, he had devoted much time to the study of this delightful art, for which, from a child, he had evinced a decided talent.

On Lady Seagrove's asking him whether he sung; and Miss Trimmer's remarking that she "wath thure he did by hith fathe;" while Florence begged him to sing, he replied that he would be happy to do so if she would accompany him. Florence gladly assented, and requested him to select a song, which, as she had a great deal of music besides what was calculated to suit her own voice, he had no difficulty in doing. She was as much charmed with his performance as he had been with hers; and even Lady Seagrove, who had very little feeling or love for music—although, like many with whom this is the case, she affected to have a

great deal—was struck with the beauty of his voice, which was a low tenor, remarkably sweet, and full in quality.

She then expressed a desire to hear Florence and Wentworth sing a duet, which was immediately complied with; and she pronounced that their voices harmonised beautifully; in which opinion better judges and more severe critics might have agreed with her.

"Really, Captain Wentworth," said Miss Trimmer, in her sweetest lisp, "you do thing motht delightfully. I declare, when you and Florenth were thinging that duet, I fanthied mythelf at the Italian Opera. Do you ever condethend to thing Englith, or do you, like a great many people, make a point of thinging nothing but foreign languageth?"

"No, indeed," replied Wentworth. "I am very fond of singing English songs when I am fortunate enough to meet with one that is a fine, or even a moderately fine composition; but the reason that I, and I have no doubt many others, sing but few English songs is, that there are so very few English songs worth singing."

"Do you, then," said Lady Seagrove, "forget Balfe, Bishop, Arne, Wallace, Severn, and other composers of that class? Surely some of their songs are very pretty."

"So they are," said Wentworth; "they are very pretty trifles; things which one is pleased with hearing two or three times and then grows weary of, which will enjoy a degree of popularity for a few years, and then be forgotten for ever. There are brilliant exceptions, I grant, for each of the composers you have mentioned, and several of the same class you have not mentioned, have written melodies of which even the best Italian masters need not be ashamed."

"And does not this prove," said Florence, "that the want of classical compositions in the English school, which like yourself I have often lamented, does not proceed so much from a deficiency of talent as from a wrong direction of that talent?"

Wentworth said that he was quite of her opinion; and Florence remarked, "Some people object that the English language is so ill-adapted for singing, as to be a great drawback to composers of vocal music; but I do not agree with them."

"Nor do I," said Wentworth. "I query whether our language, considered in reference to singing, is not superior both to French and German, for it has a boldness and energy which the French wants, and is free from the guttural sounds of the German."

"Well," said Lady Seagrove, "when we were in London this season we heard an English version of the 'Puritani,' and I could not help thinking the words sounded disagreeably."

"Our language," said Wentworth, "never sounds to greater disadvantage than in translations of Italian operas. The languages are so utterly dissimilar, that the translator has more than the usual difficulties to contend with. An English version of 'Freischutz,' or 'Jessonda,' is far more harmonious, from there being some general resemblance in the words and construction of the English and German. But it is not by translations that we should judge of the capabilities of our own language for singing. Take poetry, written without the—as one might think—almost insuperable obstacles a translator and adapter of the words of vocal music has to contend with, and then say if ours is not both a fine-sounding and a musical language."

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RUINED CONVENTUAL CHURCH.

BENEATH a wild cherry-tree, planted by chance in the abbey gardens, and of such remarkable size that it almost rivalled the elms and lime-trees surrounding it, and when in bloom resembled an enormous garland, stood two young maidens, both of rare beauty, though in totally different styles: the one being fair-haired and blue-eyed, with a snowy skin tinged with delicate bloom, like that of roses seen through milk, to borrow a simile from old Anacreon; while the other far eclipsed her in the brilliancy of her complexion, the dark splendour of her eyes, and the luxuriance of her jetty tresses, which, unbound and knotted with ribands, flowed down almost to the ground. In age, there was little disparity between them, though perhaps the dark-haired girl might be a year nearer twenty than the other, and somewhat more of seriousness, though not much, sat upon her lovely countenance than on the other's laughing features. Different were they, too, in degree, and here social position was infinitely in favour of the fairer girl, but no one would have judged it so if not previously acquainted with their history. Indeed, it was rather the one having least title to be proud (if any one has such title) who now seemed to look up to her companion with mingled admiration and regard; the latter being enthralled at the moment by the rich notes of a thrush poured from a neighbouring lime-tree.

Pleasant was the garden where the two girls stood, shaded by great trees, laid out in exquisite parterres, with knots and figures, quaint flower-beds, shorn trees and hedges, covered alleys and arbours, terraces and mounds, in the taste of the time, and above all an admirably kept bowling-green. It was bounded on the one hand by the ruined chapter-house and vestry of the old monastic structure, and on the other by the stately pile of buildings formerly making part of the abbot's lodging, in which the long gallery was situated, some of its windows looking upon the bowling-green, and then kept in excellent condition, but now roofless and desolate. Behind them, on the right, half-hidden by trees, lay the desecrated and despoiled conventual church. Reared at such cost, and

with so much magnificence, by thirteen abbots—the great work having been commenced, as heretofore stated, by Robert de Topcliffe, in 1330, and only completed in all its details by John Paslew—this splendid structure, surpassing, according to Whitaker, "many cathedrals in extent," was now abandoned to the slow ravages of decay. Would it never encountered worse enemy! But some half century later, the hand of man was called in to accelerate its destruction, and it was then almost entirely rased to the ground. At the period in question, though partially unroofed, and with some of the walls destroyed, it was still beautiful and picturesque—more picturesque, indeed, than in the days of its pride and splendour. The tower with its lofty crocketed spire was still standing, though the latter was cracked, and tottering, and the jackdaws roosted within its windows and belfry. Two ranges of broken columns told of the bygone glories of the aisles; and the beautiful side chapels having escaped injury better than other parts of the fabric, remained in tolerable preservation. But the choir and high altar were stripped of all their rich carving and ornaments, and the rain descended through the open rood-loft upon the now grass-grown graves of the abbots in the presbytery. Here and there the ramified mullions still retained their wealth of painted glass, and the grand eastern window shone gorgeously as of yore. All else was neglect and ruin. Briers and turf usurped the place of the marble pavement; many of the pillars were festooned with ivy; and, in some places, the shattered walls were covered with creepers, and trees had taken root in the crevices of the masonry. Beautiful at all times were these magnificent ruins; but never so beautiful as when seen by the witching light of the moon—the hour, according to the best authority, when all ruins should be viewed—when the long lines of broken pillars, the mouldering arches, and the still glowing panes over the altar, had a magical effect.

In front of the maidens stood a square tower, part of the defences of the religious establishment erected by Abbot Lyndelay, in the reign of Edward III., but disused and decaying. It was sustained by high and richly-groined arches, crossing the swift mill-race, and faced the river. A path led through the ruined chapter-house to the spacious cloister quadrangle, once used as a cemetery for the monks, but now converted into a kitchen-garden, its broad area being planted out, and fruit trees trained against the hoary walls. Little of the old refectory was left, except the dilapidated stairs once conducting to the gallery where the brethren were wont to take their meals, but the inner wall still served to inclose the garden on that side. Of the dormitory, formerly constituting the eastern angle of the cloisters, the shell was still left, and it was used partly as a grange, partly as a shed for cattle, the farm-yard and tenements lying on this side.

Thus it will be seen that the garden and grounds, filling up the ruins of Whalley Abbey, offered abundant points of picturesque attraction; all of which, with the exception of the ruined conventual church, had been visited by the two girls. They had tracked the labyrinths of passages, scaled the broken staircases, crept into the roofless and neglected chambers, peered timorously into the black and yawning vaults, and now, having finished their investigations, had paused for awhile, previous to extending their ramble to the church, beneath the wild cherry-tree to listen to the warbling of the birds.

"You should hear the nightingales at Middleton, Alizon," observed Dorothy Assheton, breaking silence; "they sing even more exquisitely than yon thrush. You must come and see me. I should like to show you the old house and gardens, though they are very different from these, and we have no ancient monastic ruins to ornament them. Still, they are very beautiful; and, as I find you are fond of flowers, I will show you some I have reared myself, for I am something of a gardener, Alizon. Promise you will come."

"I wish I dared promise it," replied Alizon.

"And why not, then?" cried Dorothy. "What should prevent you? Do you know, Alizon, what I should like better than all? You are so amiable, and so good, and so—so very pretty; nay, don't blush—there is no one by to hear me—you are so charming altogether, that I should like you to come and live with me. You shall be my handmaiden if you will."

"I should desire nothing better, sweet young lady," replied Alizon; "but——"

"But what?" cried Dorothy. "You have only your own consent to obtain."

"Alas! I have," replied Alizon.

"How can that be!" cried Dorothy, with a disappointed look. "It is not likely your mother will stand in the way of your advancement, and you have not, I suppose, any other tie? Nay, forgive me if I appear too inquisitive. My curiosity only proceeds from the interest I take in you."

"I know it—I feel it, dear kind young lady," replied Alizon, with the colour again mounting her cheeks. "I have no tie in the world except my family. But I am persuaded my mother will never allow me to quit her, however great the advantage might be to me."

"Well, though sorry, I am scarcely surprised at it," said Dorothy. "She must love you too dearly to part with you."

"I wish I could think so," sighed Alizon. "Proud of me in some sort, though with little reason, she may be, but love me, most assuredly, she does not. Nay, more, I am persuaded she would be glad to be freed from my presence, which is an evident restraint and annoyance to her, were it not for some motive stronger than natural affection that binds her to me."

"Now, in good sooth, you amaze me, Alizon!" cried Dorothy. "What possible motive can it be, if not of affection?"

"Of interest, I think," replied Alizon. "I speak to you without reserve, dear young lady, for the sympathy you have shown me deserves and demands confidence on my part, and there are none with whom I can freely converse, so that every emotion has been locked up in my own bosom. My mother fancies I shall one day be of use to her, and, therefore, keeps me with her. Hints to this effect she has thrown out, when indulging in the uncontrollable fits of passion to which she is liable. And yet I have no just reason to complain, for though she has shown me little maternal tenderness, and repelled all exhibition of affection on my part, she has treated me very differently from her other children, and with much greater consideration. I can make slight boast of education, but the best the village could afford has been given me; and I have derived much religious culture from good Doctor Ormerod. The kind ladies of the vicarage

proposed, as you have done, that I should live with them, but my mother forbade it; enjoining me, on the peril of incurring her displeasure, not to leave her, and reminding me of all the benefits I have received from her, and of the necessity of making an adequate return. And, ungrateful indeed, I should be, if I did not comply; for though her manner is harsh and cold to me, she has never ill-used me, as she has done her favourite child, my little sister Jennet, but has always allowed me a separate chamber, where I can retire when I please, to read, or meditate, or pray. For alas! dear young lady, I dare not pray before my mother. Be not shocked at what I tell you, but I cannot hide it. My poor mother denies herself the consolation of religion—never addresses herself to Heaven in prayer—never opens the Book of Life and Truth—never enters church. In her own mistaken way she has brought up poor little Jennet, who has been taught to make a scoff at religious truths and ordinances, and has never been suffered to keep holy the Sabbath-day. Happy and thankful am I, that no such evil lessons have been taught me, but rather that I have profited by the sad example. In my own secret chamber I have prayed, daily and nightly, for both—prayed that their hearts might be turned. Often have I besought my mother to let me take Jennet to church, but she never would consent. And in that poor misguided child, dear young lady, there is a strange mixture of good and ill. Afflicted with personal deformity, and delicate in health, the mind, perhaps, sympathising with the body, she is wayward and uncertain in temper, but sensitive and keenly alive to kindness, and with a shrewdness beyond her years. At the risk of offending my mother, for I felt confident I was acting rightly, I have endeavoured to instil religious principles into her heart, and to inspire her with a love of truth. Sometimes she has listened to me; and I have observed strange struggles in her nature, as if the good were obtaining mastery of the evil principle, and I have striven the more to convince her, and win her over, but never with entire success, for my efforts have been overcome by pernicious counsels and sceptical sneers. Oh, dear young lady, what would I not do to be the instrument of her salvation!"

"You pain me much by this relation, Alizon," said Dorothy Assheton, who had listened with profound attention, "and I now wish more ardently than ever to take you from such a family."

"I cannot leave them, dear young lady," replied Alizon; "for I feel I may be of infinite service—especially to Jennet—by staying with them. Where there is a soul to be saved, especially the soul of one dear as a sister, no sacrifice can be too great to make—no price too heavy to pay. By the blessing of Heaven I hope to save her! And that is the great tie that binds me to a home only so in name."

"I will not oppose your virtuous intentions, dear Alizon," replied Dorothy; "but I must now mention a circumstance in connexion with your mother, of which you are perhaps in ignorance, but which it is right you should know, and therefore no false delicacy on my part shall restrain me from mentioning it. Your grandmother, old Demdike, is in very ill repute in Pendle, and is stigmatised by the common folk, and even by others, as a witch. Your mother, too, shares in the opprobrium attaching to her."

"I dreaded this," replied Alizon, turning deadly pale, and trembling violently; "I feared you had heard the terrible report. But oh, believe

it not. My poor mother is erring enough, but she is not so bad as that. Oh, believe it not!"

"I will not believe it," said Dorothy, "since she is blessed with such a daughter as you. But what I fear is that you—you, so kind, so good, so beautiful—may come under the same ban."

"I must run this risk also, in the good work I have appointed myself," replied Alizon. "If I am ill thought of by men, I shall have the approval of my own conscience to uphold me. Whatever betide, and whatever be said, do not you think ill of me, dear young lady."

"Fear it not," returned Dorothy, earnestly.

While thus conversing, they gradually strayed away from the cherry-tree, and, taking a winding path leading in that direction, entered the conventual church, about the middle of the south aisle. After gazing with wonder and delight at the still majestic pillars, that, like ghosts of the departed brethren, seemed to protest against the desolation around them, they took their way along the nave, through broken arches, and over prostrate fragments of stone, to the eastern extremity of the fane, and having admired the light shafts and clerestory windows of the choir, as well as the magnificent painted glass over the altar, they stopped before an arched doorway on the right, with two Gothic niches, in one of which was a small stone statue of Saint Agnes, with her lamb, and in the other a similar representation of Saint Margaret, crowned, and piercing the dragon, with a cross. Both were sculptures of much merit, and it was wonderful they had escaped destruction. The door was closed, but it easily opened when tried by Dorothy, and they found themselves in a small but beautiful chapel. What struck them chiefly in it was a magnificent monument of white marble, enriched with numerous small shields, painted and gilt, supporting two recumbent figures, representing Henry de Lacy, one of the founders of the abbey, and his consort. The knight was cased in plate armour, covered with a surcoat, emblazoned with his arms, and his feet resting upon a hound. This superb monument was wholly uninjured, the painting and gilding being still fresh and bright. Behind it a flag had been removed, discovering a flight of steep stone steps, leading to a vault, or other subterranean chamber.

After looking round this chapel, Dorothy remarked,

"There is something else that has just occurred to me. When a child, a strange dark tale was told me to the effect that the last ill-fated Abbot of Whalley laid his dying curse upon your grandmother, then an infant, predicting that she should be a witch, and the mother of witches."

"I have heard the dread tradition, too," rejoined Alizon; "but I cannot, will not believe it. An all-benign Power will never sanction such terrible imprecations."

"Far be it from me to affirm the contrary," replied Dorothy; "but it is undoubted that some families have been, and are, under the influence of an inevitable fatality. In one respect, connected also with the same unfortunate prelate, I might instance our own family. Abbot Paslew is said to be unlucky to us even in his grave. If such a curse as I have described hangs over the head of your family, all your efforts to remove it will be ineffectual."

"I trust not," said Alizon. "Oh! dear young lady, you have now

penetrated the secret of my heart. The mystery of my life is laid open to you. Disguise it as I may, I cannot but believe my mother to be under some baneful influence. Her unholy life, her strange actions, all impress me with the idea. And there is the same tendency in Jennet."

"You have a brother, have you not?" inquired Dorothy.

"I have," returned Alizon, slightly colouring; "but I see little of him, for he lives near my grandmother in Pendle Forest, and always avoids me in his rare visits here. You will think it strange when I tell you I have never beheld my grandmother Demdike."

"I am glad to hear it," exclaimed Dorothy.

"I have never even been to Pendle," pursued Alizon, "though Jennet and my mother go there frequently. At one time I much wished to see my aged relative, and pressed my mother to take me with her; but she refused, and now I have no desire to go."

"Strange!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Everything you tell me strengthens the idea I conceived the moment I saw you, and which my brother also entertained, that you are not the daughter of Elizabeth Device."

"Did your brother think this?" cried Alizon, eagerly. But she immediately cast down her eyes.

"He did," replied Dorothy, not noticing her confusion. "'It is impossible,' he said, 'that that lovely girl can be sprung from'—but I will not wound you by adding the rest."

"I cannot disown my kindred," said Alizon. "Still, I must confess that some notions of the sort have crossed me, arising, probably, from my mother's extraordinary treatment, and from many other circumstances, which, though trifling in themselves, were not without weight in leading me to the conclusion. Hitherto, I have treated it only as a passing fancy; but if you and Master Richard Assheton"—and her voice slightly faltered as she pronounced the name—"think so, it may warrant me in more seriously considering the matter."

"Do consider it most seriously, dear Alizon," cried Dorothy. "I have made up my mind, and Richard has made up his mind, too, that you are not Mother Demdike's granddaughter, nor Elizabeth Device's daughter, nor Jennet's sister—nor any relation of theirs. We are sure of it, and we will have you of our mind."

The fair and animated speaker could not help noticing the blushes that mantled Alizon's cheeks as she spoke, but she attributed them to other than the true cause. Nor did she mend the matter as she proceeded.

"I am sure you are well born, Alizon," she said, "and so it will be found in the end. And Richard thinks so, too, for he said so to me, and Richard is my oracle, Alizon."

In spite of herself, Alizon's eyes sparkled with pleasure; but she speedily checked the emotion.

"I must not indulge the dream," she said, with a sigh.

"Why not?" cried Dorothy. "I will have strict inquiries made as to your history."

"I cannot consent to it," replied Alizon. "I cannot leave one, who, if she be not my parent, has stood to me in that relation. Neither can I have her brought into trouble on my account. What will she think of me, if she learns I have indulged such a notion? She will say, and with truth, that I am the most ungrateful of human beings, as well as

the most unnatural of children. No, dear young lady, it must not be. These fancies are brilliant, but fallacious, and, like bubbles, burst as soon as formed."

"I admire your sentiments, though I do not admit the justice of your reasoning," rejoined Dorothy. "It is not on your own account merely, though that is much, that the secret of your birth, if there be one, ought to be cleared up; but, for the sake of those with whom you may be connected. There may be a mother, like mine, weeping for you as lost—a brother, like Richard, mourning you as dead. Think of the sad hearts your restoration will make joyful. As to Elizabeth Device, no consideration should be shown her. If she has stolen you from your parents, as I suspect, she deserves no pity."

"All this is mere surmise, dear young lady," replied Alizon.

At this juncture, they were startled by seeing an old woman come from behind the monument and plant herself before them. Both uttered a cry, and would have fled, but a gesture from the crone detained them. Very old was she, and of strange and sinister aspect, almost blind, bent double, with frosted brows and chin, and shaking with palsy.

"Stay where you are," cried the hag, in an imperious tone. "I want to speak to you. Come nearer to me, my pretty wheans,—nearer—nearer."

And as they complied, drawn towards her by an impulse they could not resist, the old woman caught hold of Alizon's arm, and said, with a chuckle, "So, you are the wench they call Alizon Device, eh?"

"Ay," replied Alizon, trembling like a dove in the talons of a hawk.

"Do you know who I am?" cried the hag, grasping her yet more tightly. "Do you know who I am, I say? If not, I will tell you. I am Mother Chattox, of Pendle Forest, the rival of Mother Demdike, and the enemy of all her accursed brood. Now, do you know me, wench? Men call me witch. Whether I am so or not, I have some power, as they and you shall find. Mother Demdike has often defied me—often injured me, but I will have my revenge upon her—ha! ha!"

"Let me go," cried Alizon, greatly terrified.

"I will run and bring assistance," cried Dorothy. And she flew to the door, but it resisted her attempts to open it.

"Come back," screamed the hag. "You strive in vain. The door is fast shut—fast shut. Come back, I say. Who are you?" she added, as the maid drew near, ready to sink with terror. "Your voice is an Assheton's voice. I know you now. You are Dorothy Assheton—whey-skinned, blue-eyed Dorothy. Listen to me, Dorothy. I owe your family a grudge, and if you provoke me I will pay it off in part on you. Stir not, as you value your life."

The poor girl did not dare to move, and remained, as if fascinated by the terrible old woman.

"I will tell you what has happened, Dorothy," pursued Mother Chattox. "I came hither to Whalley on business of my own; meddling with no one; harming no one. Tread upon the adder and it will bite, and when molested I bite like the adder. Your cousin, Nick Assheton, came in my way, called me 'witch,' and menaced me. I cursed him—ha! ha! And then your brother Richard——"

"What of him, in Heaven's name?" almost shrieked Alizon.

"How's this?" exclaimed Mother Chattox, placing her hand on the beating heart of the girl.

"What of Richard Assheton?" repeated Alizon.

"You love him, I feel you do, wench," cried the old crone, with fierce exultation.

"Release me, wicked woman," cried Alizon.

"Wicked, am I? ha! ha!" rejoined Mother Chattox, chuckling maliciously, "because, forsooth, I read thy heart, and betray its secrets. Wicked, eh! I tell thee, wench, again, Richard Assheton is lord and master here. Every pulse in thy bosom beats for him—for him alone. But beware of his love. Beware of it, I say. It shall bring thee ruin and despair."

"For pity's sake, release me," implored Alizon.

"Not yet," replied the inexorable old woman—"not yet. My tale is not half told. My curse fell on Richard's head, as it did on Nicholas's. And then the hell-hounds thought to catch me; but they were at fault. I tricked them nicely—ha! ha! However, they took my Nance—my pretty Nance—they seized her, bound her, bore her to the Calder—and there swam her. Curses light on them all!—all!—but chief on him who did it!"

"Who was he?" inquired Alizon, tremblingly.

"Jem Device," replied the old woman—"it was he who bound her—he who plunged her in the river, he who swam her. But I will pinch and plague him for it. I will strew his couch with nettles, and all wholesome food shall be poison to him. His blood shall be as water, and his flesh shrink from his bones. He shall waste away slowly—slowly—slowly—till he drops like a skeleton into the grave ready digged for him. All connected with him shall feel my fury. I would kill thee now, if thou wert aught of his."

"Aught of his! What mean you, old woman?" demanded Alizon.

"Why this," rejoined Mother Chattox, "and let the knowledge work in thee, to the confusion of Bess Device. Thou art not her daughter."

"It is as I thought," cried Dorothy Assheton, roused by the intelligence from her terror.

"I tell thee not this secret to pleasure thee," continued Mother Chattox, "but to confound Elizabeth Device. I have no other motive. She hath provoked my vengeance, and she shall feel it. Thou art not her child, I say. The secret of thy birth is known to me, but the time is not yet come for its disclosure. It shall out, one day, to the confusion of those who offend me. When thou goest home, tell thy reputed mother what I have said, and mark how she takes the information. Ha! who comes here?"

The hag's last exclamation was occasioned by the sudden appearance of Mistress Nutter, who opened the door of the chapel, and staring in astonishment at the group, came quickly forward.

"What makes you here, Mother Chattox?" she cried.

"I came here to avoid pursuit," replied the old hag, with a cowed manner, and in accents sounding strangely submissive after her late infuriated tone.

"What have you been saying to these girls?" demanded Mistress Nutter, authoritatively.

"Ask them," the hag replied.

"She declares that Alizon is not the daughter of Elizabeth Device," cried Dorothy Assheton.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mistress Nutter, quickly, and as if a spring of extraordinary interest had been suddenly touched. "What reason hast thou for this assertion?"

"No good reason," replied the old woman, evasively, yet with evident apprehension of her questioner.

"Good reason or bad, I will have it," cried Mistress Nutter.

"What you, too, take an interest in the wench like the rest?" returned Mother Chattox. "Is she so very winning?"

"That is no answer to my question," said the lady. "Whose child is she?"

"Ask Bess Device, or Mother Demdike," replied Mother Chattox; "they know more about the matter than me."

"I will have thee speak, and to the purpose," cried the lady, angrily.

"Many an one has lost a child who would gladly have it back again," said the old hag, mysteriously.

"Who has lost one?" asked Mistress Nutter.

"Nay, it passeth me to tell," replied the old woman, with affected ignorance. "Question those who stole her. I have set you on the track. If you fail in pursuing it, come to me. You know where to find me."

"You shall not go thus," said Mistress Nutter. "I will have a direct answer now."

And as she spoke she waved her hands twice or thrice over the old woman. In doing this her figure seemed to dilate, and her countenance underwent a marked and fearful change. All her beauty vanished, her eyes blazed, and terror sat on her wrinkled brow. The hag, on the contrary, crouched lower down, and seemed to dwindle less than her ordinary size. Writhing as from heavy blows, and with a mixture of malice and fear in her countenance, she cried, "Were I to speak, you would not thank me. Let me go."

"Answer," vociferated Mistress Nutter, disregarding the caution, and speaking in a sharp piercing voice, strangely contrasting with her ordinary utterance. "Answer, I say, or I will beat thee to the dust."

And she continued her gestures, while the sufferings of the old hag evidently increased, and she crouched nearer and nearer to the ground, moaning out the words, "Do not force me to speak. You will repent it!—you will repent it!"

"Do not torment her thus, madam," cried Alizon, who with Dorothy looked at the strange scene with mingled apprehension and wonderment. "Much as I desire to know the secret of my birth, I would not obtain it thus."

As she uttered these words, the old woman contrived to shuffle off, and disappeared behind the tomb.

"Why did you interpose, Alizon," cried Mistress Nutter, somewhat angrily, and dropping her hands. "You broke the power I had over her. I would have compelled her to speak."

"I thank you, gracious lady, for your consideration," replied Alizon, gratefully; "but the sight was too painful."

"What has become of her—where is she gone?" cried Dorothy, peeping behind the tomb. "She has crept into this vault, I suppose."

"Do not trouble yourself about her more, Dorothy," said Mistress Nutter, resuming her wonted voice and wonted looks. "Let us return to the house. Thus much is ascertained, Alizon, that you are no child of your supposed parent. Wait a little, and the rest shall be found out for you. And, meantime, be assured that I take strong interest in you."

"That we all do," added Dorothy.

"Thank you! thank you!" exclaimed Alizon, almost overpowered.

With this they went forth, and traversing the shafted aisle, quitted the conventual church, and took their way along the alley leading to the garden.

"Say not a word at present to Elizabeth Device of the information you have obtained, Alizon," observed Mistress Nutter. "I have reasons for this counsel, which I will afterwards explain to you. And do you keep silence on the subject, Dorothy."

"May I not tell Richard?" said the young lady.

"Not Richard—not any one," returned Mistress Nutter, "or you may seriously affect Alizon's prospects."

"You have cautioned me in time," cried Dorothy, "for here comes my brother with our cousin Nicholas."

And as she spoke a turn in the alley showed Richard and Nicholas Assheton, advancing towards them.

A strange revolution had been produced in Alizon's feelings by the events of the last half hour. The opinions expressed by Dorothy Assheton, as to her birth, had been singularly confirmed by Mother Chattox; but could reliance be placed on the old woman's assertions? Might they not have been made with mischievous intent? And was it not possible, nay, probable, that, in her place of concealment behind the tomb, the vindictive hag had overheard the previous conversation with Dorothy, and based her own declaration upon it? All these suggestions occurred to Alizon, but the previous idea having once gained admission to her breast, soon established itself firmly there, in spite of doubts and misgivings, and began to mix itself up with new thoughts and wishes, with which other persons were connected; for she could not help fancying she might be well-born, and if so the vast distance heretofore existing between her and Richard Assheton might be greatly diminished, if not altogether removed. So rapid is the progress of thought, that only a few minutes were required for this long train of reflections to pass through her mind, and it was merely put to flight by the approach of the main object of her thoughts.

On joining the party, Richard Assheton saw plainly that something had happened; but as both his sister and Alizon laboured under evident embarrassment he abstained from making inquiries as to its cause for the present, hoping a better opportunity of doing so would occur, and the conversation was kept up by Nicholas Assheton, who described in his wonted lively manner the encounter with Mother Chattox and Nance Redferne, the swimming of the latter, and the trickery and punishment of Potts. During the recital Mistress Nutter often glanced uneasily at the two girls, but neither of them offered any interruption, until Nicholas had finished, when Dorothy taking her brother's hand, said, with a look of affectionate admiration, "You acted like yourself, dear Richard."

Alizon did not venture to give utterance to the same sentiment, but her looks plainly expressed it.

"I only wished you had punished that cruel James Device as well as saved poor Nance," added Dorothy.

"Hush!" exclaimed Richard, glancing at Alizon.

"You need not be afraid of hurting her feelings," cried the young lady. "She does not mind him now."

"What do you mean, Dorothy?" cried Richard, in surprise.

"Oh, nothing—nothing," she replied, hastily.

"Perhaps you will explain," said Richard to Alizon.

"Indeed I cannot," she answered, in confusion.

"You would have laughed to see Potts creep out of the river," said Nicholas, turning to Dorothy; "he looked just like a drowned rat—ha! —ha!"

"You have made a bitter enemy of him, Nicholas," observed Mistress Nutter; "so look well to yourself."

"I heed him not," rejoined the squire; "he knows me now too well to meddle with me again, and I shall take good care how I put myself in his power. One thing I may mention, to show the impotent malice of the knave. Just as he was setting off, he said, 'This is not the only discovery of witchcraft I have made to-day. I have another case, nearer home.' What could he mean?"

"I know not," replied Mistress Nutter, a shade of disquietude passing over her countenance. "But he is quite capable of bringing the charge against you or any of us."

"He is so," said Nicholas. "After what has occurred, I wonder whether he will go over to Rough Lee to-morrow."

"Very likely not," replied Mistress Nutter; "and in that case Master Roger Nowell must provide some other person competent to examine the boundary-line of the properties on his behalf."

"Then you are confident of the adjudication being in your favour?" said Nicholas.

"Quite so," replied Mistress Nutter, with a self-satisfied smile.

"The result, I hope, may justify your expectation," said Nicholas; "but it is right to tell you, that Sir Ralph, in consenting to postpone his decision, has only done so out of consideration to you. If the division of the properties be as represented by him, Master Nowell will unquestionably obtain an award in his favour."

"Under such circumstances, he may," said Mistress Nutter; "but you will find the contrary turn out to be the fact. I will show you a plan I have had lately prepared, and you can then judge for yourself."

While thus conversing, the party passed through a door in the high stone wall dividing the garden from the court, and proceeded towards the principal entrance of the mansion. Built out of the ruins of the abbey, which had served as a very convenient quarry for the construction of this edifice, as well as for Portfield, the house was large and irregular, planned chiefly with the view of embodying part of the old abbot's lodging, and consisting of a wide front, with two wings, one of which looked into the court, and the other, comprehending the long gallery, into the garden. The old north-east gate of the abbey, with its lofty archway and embattled walls, served as an entrance to the great court-yard, and at its wicket ordinarily stood Ned Huddlestone, the porter, though he was absent on the present occasion, being occupied with the May-day festivities. Immediately opposite the gateway sprang a flight of stone

steps, with a double landing-place and a broad balustrade of the same material, on the lowest pillar of which was placed a large escutcheon sculptured with the arms of the family—argent, a mullet sable—with a rebus on the name—an ash on a tun. The great door to which these steps conducted stood wide open, and before it, on the upper landing-place, were collected Lady Assheton, Mistress Braddyll, Mistress Nicholas Assheton, and some other dames, laughing and conversing together. Some long-eared spaniels, favourites of the lady of the house, were chasing each other up and down the steps, disturbing the slumbers of a couple of fine bloodhounds in the court-yard; or persecuting the proud peafowl that strutted about to display their gorgeous plumage to the spectators.

On seeing the party approach, Lady Assheton came down to meet them.

"You have been long absent," she said to Dorothy; "but I suppose you have been exploring the ruins?"

"Yes, we have not left a hole or corner unvisited," was the reply.

"That is right," said Lady Assheton. "I knew you would make a good guide, Dorothy. Of course you have often seen the old conventual church before, Alizon?"

"I am ashamed to say I have not, your ladyship," she replied.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Assheton; "and yet you have lived all your life in the village?"

"Quite true, your ladyship," answered Alizon; "but these ruins have been prohibited to me."

"Not by us," said Lady Assheton; "they are open to every one."

"I was forbidden to visit them by my mother," said Alizon. And for the first time the word "mother" seemed strange to her.

Lady Assheton looked surprised, but made no remark, and mounting the steps led the way to a spacious though not very lofty chamber, with huge uncovered rafters, and a floor of polished oak. Over a great fireplace at one side, furnished with immense andirons, hung a noble pair of antlers, and similar trophies of the chase were affixed to other parts of the walls. Here and there were likewise hung rusty skull-caps, breastplates, two-handed and single-handed swords, maces, halberts, and arquebusses, with chain-shirts, buff-jerkins, matchlocks, and other warlike implements, amongst which were several shields painted with the arms of the Asshetons and their alliances. High-backed chairs of gilt leather were ranged against the walls, and ebony cabinets inlaid with ivory were set between them at intervals, supporting rare specimens of glass and earthenware. Opposite the fireplace stood a large clock, curiously painted and decorated with emblematical devices, with the signs of the zodiac, and provided with movable figures to strike the hours on a bell; while from the centre of the roof hung a great chandelier of stag's horn.

THE JEW'S STORY.

In one of my solitary rambles in a distant county of England, I chanced to find myself on the borders of a lonely wood, as evening fell. As I stood hesitating whether I should retrace my steps or penetrate into the mass of pathless forest, a figure crossed my way. It was one of those wanderers who may, at times, be seen in remote country roads; an old man, tall and gaunt, with a flowing beard, a turban on his head, and his limbs clothed in the loose garments common to the inhabitants of Oriental climes. He carried before him a small box, hanging by leathern straps from his shoulders, containing cinnamon and myrrh, saffron and cloves, and other grateful spices of the Indies and the Levant, with other ware of little value. The expression of his countenance, his brilliant eye, his aquiline profile, declared him to be a Jew. The rich blood of the children of Israel flowed beneath the dark complexion of eastern origin. He had wandered from a distant country, a very lovely clime, than which there are few so fair beneath the sun—from Anatolia.

He stopped as he approached me, and turning towards me a countenance deeply lined by care and fatigue, he said, gently,

"Have you any wish to buy the wares I carry? Here are drugs, dried fruits, and pleasant spices. I have coffee from Mecca, gall from Sinoub, and figs from Aleppo. I have pretty trinkets—chains and rings."

I shook my head, and, as I was passing on, I fancied I noticed, in the dim light, that a tear trembled in the wanderer's eye. I stopped again, and said,

"You are ill and tired."

"I am poor," answered he, "but I was not always so. I am unhappy, but once was not; this is the eve of a festival held holy by the people of whom I am; I must pass it beneath the hedges or in the lone fields, for I am near none of my brethren."

"Your brethren?" I asked, inquisitively.

"My fellow believers, I mean," he replied; "I am a Jew."

"They say," I observed, anxious to testify an interest in the solitary wanderer, "that your brethren are kind one to the other."

"Sir," replied the Israelite, "the tie of common faith is a password between us; the rich will give food to his poor brother, the strong will lend an arm to the feeble, the happy will console the wretched. When I had wealth and strength and happiness, I hope I acted generously to my people."

"You were rich, once," I said, endeavouring to prove that my motive for inquiry was no impertinent sentiment.

"I was," he said, "but I have fallen."

"Your story has, perchance, been a strange one," I remarked; "I should like to hear it."

Suddenly, his manner changed. A thousand emotions seemed to be struggling in his breast and to check the current of his voice. At length, after a pause, he said,

"Sir, I will tell it—at all times, it does me good. It matters not how far I go on my journey to-night. Let us walk on, however, and I will tell you all.

"My name," he began, "is Eliezer, the son of Reuben. In the country whence I come, we are called by our father's name, added to our own, in lieu of surname. From time almost immemorial my ancestors dwelt in a little house a few paces within the gates of the Jewish quarter of Smyrna. Here my father followed his father's trade, and dealt in spices and drugs, for which he was famous even beyond the precincts of the Ghetto; and here I dwelt with him.

When but a mere boy, I desired to marry a beautiful maiden living near us: my father, from prudent motives, opposed my wishes. For years I endeavoured to change his resolution; but in vain. He died, protesting against my contracting the alliance on which I had set my heart. While he lived, I obeyed him; but scarcely had the sods above his coffin clumped together, scarcely had the thirty days of mourning expired, when I went to my neighbour's house and demanded his daughter in marriage.

You will see that the disobedience of the son was avenged seventy-fold!

My wife, after some few years of marriage, brought me but one child, in giving life to whom, she sacrificed her own. This child, my daughter (whose entrance in this valley of the shadow was embittered by the loss of one whom I had so fondly cherished), was, as you may well believe, very dear to me. I tended her when she was a feeble baby; I watched, with unceasing care, her progress from infancy to womanhood; I watched her, Heaven only knows how fondly! and every summer that passed above her head, taught me how to love her more and more.

She had no wish ungratified; every girlish fancy was anticipated. I, and all about me, made the great object of our lives to give her pleasure.

But, in this world, I have learned that no joy lasts for ever.

It chanced one day—the very day that she had completed her eighteenth year, and was one of the most graceful and beautiful of the women of Smyrna—it chanced that I approached her room unexpectedly. What was my astonishment, on entering, to perceive that she held in her hand a portrait! A portrait!—whose could it be? I knew that such trifles were forbidden amongst Mussulmans. I sprang forward, excitedly, to examine the picture. She made an effort to conceal it; but I tore it from her, and I beheld the likeness of a young Christian—a merchant who lived near to us, without the Ghetto. It was, I say, the likeness of a French Christian, an alien to her country, an alien to her brethren, an alien to her faith. Transported by my fury, I asked the meaning of this. The trembling girl threw herself at my feet, and, bursting into tears, endeavoured to assuage my anger, and told me—horrible tale for a Jewish father's ears—told me that she loved the Gentile! Yes, she told me she loved him; that for three years she had cherished her love in secret; and that the young Christian loved her, tenderly, in return.

Then, when I heard all—when I knew all—I cursed the Gentile aloud; I cursed him ruthlessly; and I had also cursed my child, had not the sight of her touching and tearful beauty checked my voice; and the memory of her dead mother, who perished to give me my daughter, stayed the torrent of my rage.

I tried every means—persuasions, commands, advice, appeal to her heart, menace of unforgiving wrath—to induce her to abandon this fear-

ful attachment. In vain—in vain; she was immovable; she was resolute in her adherence to her unholy affection. At last, having long struggled to combat this trouble, I resolved on taking a great measure. I sold off my business, quickly and therefore disadvantageously; and then, without informing any one of my intentions, I quitted Smyrna suddenly, taking my daughter with me.

My first halt was at a small town, a day's journey from Smyrna; I hired two chambers in a lonely house, and prepared to pass the night there.

Early the next morning I rose to recommence my journey. I sought my daughter's chamber, and bid her prepare to accompany me.

My God! she had fled—fled in the night—no one in the house knew when nor whither.

Fast as the fleetest horse could fly, I sped back to Smyrna, and learnt, as I had expected, that the young Christian had left the town the previous morning. My suspicions were confirmed. My child—my soul—my treasure had fled with the alien. The great storm had broken over my devoted head.

I found Smyrna hateful to me; I placed my bags of sequins on a mule, with a small bale of produce of Anatolia, and quitted for ever the city in which I was born, where my fathers were buried, and where I had hoped to die.

I crossed the Dardanelles, and fixed my residence at Constantinople; but the remembrance of my daughter weighed heavily on my soul. It gnawed on my spirit. I could not rest.

I made unceasing inquiries at the various embassies in Pera. At length my efforts met with some success. I obtained at the French legation a clue. I was told that, about eighteen months or two years before, two persons, answering to the description I had drawn, had crossed the frontier dividing Turkey from Hungary, professing their intention to proceed to France. I flew to Vienna; thence traced the route of the fugitives to Baden; from Baden to Aix-la-Chapelle; and there lost the thread of their progress for some time. At last, I was enabled to trace them to Strasburg; and, after a ceaseless and terrible search that lasted three years, I succeeded in procuring information that persons, answering to the appearance of my daughter and her husband, had arrived some three months previously in Paris, and had taken up their residence in the Rue Maubuée, a small, mean street in one of the most unwholesome quarters of Paris, the one inhabited by the lower classes of Jews.

When I remember all I suffered during my three years' search—the frequently fruitless expeditions, the sleepless nights, the restless days; when I remember how full my joy was when I thought that I should again see my child and meet her destroyer face to face,—I do not wonder that I knelt down, overpowered, on the threshold of the house where I learnt the last intelligence, and gave way—for the first time for years—to frantic tears!

[Here the Jew paused, and, after a moment's hesitation, proceeded as follows:]

I went soon to the Rue Maubuée, a mean and narrow lane, unwholesome, as you, perhaps, know some quarters of that city to be. I entered

house after house, careless of the fact that in some places I was ridiculed as a madman; in others, scouted as an agent of police. At length, in one house, I was informed there resided a lady who could speak but little French, or even German, a favourite dialect of that part of Paris. I begged the porter to show me her room; I fancied he hesitated, so I pushed some gold into his hand, and followed him up a filthy and dark staircase to an apartment at the very top of the house. We paused before the door; it was open. I was to see my child again!

I do not remember how I entered, or what I said or saw, at first. I only know—I only recal to mind—that I found myself on my knees before a low bed, on which lay a pale, emaciated, feeble creature, who pressed my hands in hers, and said she was my daughter.

She knew me again, despite the sorrows and the toils that had furrowed my brow and blanched my hair. I think, if my memory fails me not, that I did not recognise her; she was *so* changed; she was beautiful no more; her hands that held mine were cold and numbed, as if the veins that crossed them were bloodless utterly; her hair was grey—not twenty-five years old, and her hair all grey! Her very voice had changed its tone. Oh, Heaven! what agony! Six years since I had seen her last, and the father did not know his child again.

But she!—she looked at me intently; she called me by my name; said she was my child, and sank back, speechless, in a heavy faint. She recovered soon, however, to tell me that she was more wretched than human lip had power to describe, and that her life hung on my forgiveness.

My forgiveness! poor child! Who, with a father's heart, could have steeled his spirit against the daughter who had been torn from him for six long years, and then restored, steeped in the darkest misery? What father, then, could have remembered that she had erred against his honour, ay, or against his faith? What father, then, could have coldly seen her tears and heard her plaintive prayers? What father, of human mould, but would have done as I did in that awful moment—I, who clasped my sinning girl to my torn breast, and laid my hand gently on her head, to bless her as I blest her in the olden days, when her soul knew no impurity, and her heart no pang?

And then, as she laid on my breast, she told me a sad story for a father's ear. She said that she had, at first, fled with the Gentile to Turkey, and thence, by the route I have alluded to, she went to Paris. He had, in the beginning, treated her kindly, and even lovingly; but when they once touched the soil of France his manner changed gradually towards her—his voice became more harsh, his conduct more austere, his words less gently chosen, until, at last, he treated her with rough unkindness.

A child was born to her at Strasburg. After the birth of their baby he began to return to his former bearing towards her; his manner somewhat softened; he hired elegant rooms for her, and rendered her all requisite attention. When the child was some six months old, her seducer left her for a journey of some weeks. He returned, unexpectedly, in the middle of a wintry night, bid her prepare to go with him on a second tour, placed her in a carriage that waited at the door, and removed her by rapid stages to Paris.

Arriving there, he drove to the miserable house in the Rue Maubuée, where she then stayed; left her there with her baby; and after she had been a few hours in Paris, he quitted her room, placing in her hands a hundred francs, and a few words written on a slip of paper; and she never saw him more!

On the paper the heartless ruffian had inscribed these cruel words:

'The daughter who deserted her father, can have but little cause to blame the lover who deserts his mistress.'

She was then desolate—I shudder to think how desolate! And now, in her cold solitude, remorse—which the voice of passion had long stifled—burst on her soul in merciless violence. The memory of the past was more cruel to her than the anticipation of the future. It is not so much the sorrow undeserved that drives men mad, as the tortures of remorse; and thus her agony grew strong, almost beyond endurance.

And then came another sorrow: a fearful disease, working premature decay, poisoned the currents of her blood. She pined mentally, and wasted bodily. The sword and its scabbard were destroyed in unison.

I will not prolong the story of her sufferings. Let it be enough to say, that, as she finished the terrible recital, she drew the last coin left her from beneath her pillow, and, pointing to her sleeping baby, she said, calmly,

'Now that thou hast come, my father, I shall be saved one punishment, at least. I shall not see my daughter perish before mine eyes.'

I spoke to her in the language of her fathers, the language that she had never heard in the stranger land. I told her how I had travelled over weary leagues of rugged ground to have the joy of meeting her again; and how I readily forgave her every pang her waywardness had caused me; and how I felt that, after all, perhaps I—not she—should bear the greater blame, for not considering more generously the impulses of youth: for, do you see, she was my daughter! Then I besought her, by all the love she bore me, to strive, with pious earnestness, to banish from her mind all memory of the alien: then, we might fling oblivion over all past sorrows, and live as if trouble had never fallen on our dwelling.

But she said all such hope was vain; that she knew she was dying, and now could die in peace, since she had seen me again and had been forgiven. She only asked to leave her child in my care; but, when she placed the smiling baby in my arms, I had, for one moment, a thought of casting from me that fruit of an unholy alliance—the offspring of him who had worked the disgrace of my daughter and the dishonour of my house. But better feelings drove the shadow forth; for, sir, it was my daughter's child.

After we had talked gently and calmly for a time, and she had told me that her seducer was known by the name of Victor Armand (a name, I pray you, sir, never to forget), I thought she seemed to rally; her voice grew more firm, her spirits cheered; she even spoke of recovery; thought that my presence gave her new vigour, and that she could go with me and her baby to some tranquil and secluded place; far, far from the stranger land of pollution, beneath the sunny sky of the father-home. There might she learn forgetfulness at last; so only that she went away—far away—from the scene of her misery and sin. And so the night wore on. But, before morning broke, she relapsed fatally. Suddenly, a great change took place. Suddenly, the cup of

hope I had dared to raise to my lips was dashed pitilessly away. Suddenly, the heart that was pressed to mine, fluttered and stopped its restless throbs. Suddenly, a horrid instinct told me that my daughter, God help me! my daughter was dead!

I heard a piercing shriek break from her lips, as the soul winged its course to Heaven. I looked at her face, and knew all then. What need to grasp her pulse or touch her lips. Oh! sir, my heart was desolate, in truth; my child was dead.

[Again the wanderer paused, and, bending his brow on his hands, the hot tears fell fast down his furrowed cheeks. It is not meet to see a childless father's grief, so I turned my head aside, until he resumed his story.]

Sir (he continued, in a tremulous voice), I can weep now; *then*, I had no tears. And when my daughter was laid in her grave, and her baby beside her, for the bud perished with the parent flower, what tie had I to hold me to life? What more use was I in the broad world? What link could bind me to existence? I had nothing more to love—I had nothing more to guard—I had nothing more to cling to. No, sir, that was true; but I lived still, for my task was not complete. I had to avenge, to avenge my daughter's misery, her dishonour, and her death!

[As he said those words, if tears still gushed from his breast, the fire that must have raged there had surely dried up, eternally, the blessed fount.]

Sir (he went on to say), had you seen your only child in the last great agony—had you heard her thrilling shriek as her spirit tore itself away—had dying eyes been fixed on yours with a glance of such unutterable anguish—had you seen all that I have seen, that I saw in that supreme hour!—oh! believe me, you would have dashed from your heart all gentle thoughts everlastingly; you would have yielded faith, religion, charity, *all* to the excess of your misery; you would have done as I have done, or you are not human; you would have sworn by the cold corpse of your dead child the oath I swore; you would have prayed the prayer I prayed; you would have framed the curse I framed; and you would have asked the God who afflicted you never to let your bones rest in the grave till the death-hour of your child was avenged!

So, for dreary years—I do not know how many, I never cared to count—I have sought the ruffian, for he dwells in this country; I have sought him for lonesome, toiling days; and I must seek him still. I tell you, I must seek him till I die! (continued the Israelite) ay, though I live for ages! though I live till my very memory fails me, and I forget all—all the past—except that one great agony which drives me forth, a wanderer on the cold face of earth. I shall live until I meet him whom I have cursed in my soul—and strike him to the ground—to avenge the dying anguish of my lost darling in her murderer's blood!"

"Hush!" said I, grasping his arm; "remember that our God said, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay!'"

"I do remember it," he answered, bitterly; "but He told us, also, to 'tread the lion under foot, and tear the teeth from the mouth of the dragon.' This is my mission."

"But," I asked, "is this the sole object of your life? Do you wander forth—old, poor, wretched—to wreak an unholy vengeance on him who wronged your child; and for no other purpose?"

"Do not call it *unholy*," replied the Jew. "Heaven will give me the power to fulfil a portion of the bitter, bitter curse that burst from my lips over my girl's dead body. No! no! by the grave of my father, by my hopes of redemption, I swear to you that I never will forget my daughter's farewell cry, and I never will forgive the fiend who murdered her!"

"But does not that very memory of your past sorrow," I asked, "bring gentler thoughts to your burning breast?"

"Gentler thoughts!" he answered: "I tell you I have had no gentle thoughts for years. All tenderness is quenched for me eternally. I know no peace, nor hope, nor rest, save *there* alone," pointing towards heaven with his thin hand. As he spoke these melancholy words, he bowed profoundly and passed on his weary way—a lonely wanderer! feeble as a mere child physically, yet morally so strong in purpose. A madness, a horrid longing that must be bootless, and would be immeasurably culpable if gratified, drove him on unceasingly. In the frantic hope that possessed him, he had almost forgotten the intensity of his sorrow. As I said before, a raging fire of vengeance dried up the fount of tears within his withered breast!

A few months after this adventure, I was driving through the county town of L—— early in the morning. There was a great crowd in the market-place, with faces upturned to where the shire gaol lifted its dark and ugly front. Following the direction of the thousand eager eyes, I soon understood the cause that had drawn the multitude together. A man had just suffered the hideous and disgusting death which, despite our strides in civilisation and our comprehension of religion, our legislators still venture to inflict on the felon, and to make a lesson (Heaven knows how evil in effect) to their less enlightened fellows. A quivering form was hanging from a cord in the writhing agonies of death, and from his convulsive tortures the multitude were—to *learn!*—to learn to respect the peace and pity the sufferings of others. From the murmur in the crowd I soon heard all particulars of the culprit. He was a Frenchman; a noted highwayman, who had had recourse to that guilty life after losing his wealth at the gambling table. He was still young; his name was Victor Armand. And so the vengeance of Heaven had, at last, been wrought, and the pursuer knew it not. The body of the polluter waved disgracefully in the wind, and the wronged old man still went his lonely way, and still would toil in pursuance of his hopeless purpose, until his sufferings should cease beneath the cold sod that his weary feet were treading. For, who shall deny this immutable truth? God reserves to himself alone the chastisement of the guilty—the retribution of the ruthless; vengeance belongs to Him—"He will repay."

THE UNKNOWN.

BEING THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

> Let me play the fool;
> With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
> And let my liver rather heat with wine,
> Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
> Why should a man whose blood is warm within him,
> Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
>
> Shakspeare.

"Stop, coachman, stop!" exclaimed a voice, as her Majesty's mail, wheeling round by the Talbot Inn, after its detour to W——, entered again the road to S——.

"Not a penny, you blundering clodpole; and as to the people at the inn, present my compliments, and ask if I shall recommend them to the Bible Society? A nice bunch of ye, truly; drive on, coachee; all right. To tell me," continued the speaker, as he adjusted his cloak on the seat which he had taken; "to tell me the mail had gone, that they might secure me for the night in such a cut-throat hole. Licensed to deal in liquors, indeed; licensed to deal in lies rather—informing me to the nicety of a second how long since the last coach had gone, and here I am. He that hath ears to hear let him hear, I say; but for the mellifluous notes of the guard's horn I should most unmistakably have been booked for the night, in a room where I found the winds playing hide and seek, and blue devils written in every corner. Too bad, sir, too bad!"

Sitting on the box seat, I had only obtained a glance at the new comer as he mounted the coach, occupying a place behind me; but when he had thus given vent to his spleen, and believing the "too bad, sir," to be addressed to myself, I turned to inquire into the particulars, and to look at the speaker.

He was apparently something under thirty, and good-looking, intelligence and humour speaking in his eyes together. He was well dressed, and there was, moreover, that particular style in his general appearance, which, although aided by, is still independent of figure, a well-cut coat, or tie of the cravat. His luggage consisted of a small carpet-bag, which, with a very handsomely chased silver-headed walking-stick, he carried in his hand. From some place in the neighbourhood, to the inn where we had taken him up, it appeared he had posted, with the view of being in time for the mail, and on his arrival had been solemnly assured by the people at the Talbot that the last coach had passed a few minutes before. Whilst inspecting the only spare bedroom which the place afforded, and debating in his mind which would be most desirable, the boards or the bed, for his couch when he should retire to rest, the blast of a horn had caught his ear, and he had instantly beat a retreat from the place, addressing the compound of waiter, boots, and ostler, who, requesting a fee, followed in his wake, as we have already heard.

I rarely pass five minutes in the company of any individual without forming an opinion as to his occupation, profession, and station in life; in this instance, however, my speculations were completely baffled. At one time I judged the stranger to belong to the same brotherhood as myself, and so led the conversation that ensued between us as to test the correctness of my surmise, and this soon revealed that to be right I must try again. As we proceeded, it next occurred to me that he was, in all probability, an attorney or a surgeon, practising in one of the small towns in the neighbourhood, or, not unlikely, in S——, the place of our destination. This hypothesis was, however, upset by some remarks which, in the course of our colloquy, he made, showing that he belonged to neither of the professions named, as also by his intimating that he knew little or nothing of the country through which we were passing, never having visited it before.

As we approached the end of our journey I was pleased to think that my companionship with the stranger was about to terminate, for calling to mind the scantiness of his luggage, and my conjectures of his being a respectable something having given place to a slight suspicion that he was not unlikely to belong to that Academy of Arts whose members are best known as the "swell mob," I felt not a little anxious on our arrival at S—— in seeing my luggage safely deposited in the lobby of the King's Arms, under the immediate care and superintendence of Mr. Boots.

On descending from the coach and about to bid good night to the gentleman with the carpet-bag, judge my astonishment, and, with my later impressions of his character, my annoyance, on hearing him exclaim, "Oh! you are stopping here, the King's Arms; a good house, I doubt not; here, too, will I pitch my tent," and following me into the commercial room, he proceeded to ring the bell, as he said, that he might see a bed-chamber at once. For a moment I hesitated whether or not to beat a retreat from the place; it then occurred to me that I could not with justice quit a house which I had visited for years, merely because the stranger had chosen to avail himself of the accommodation it afforded. Besides, I had only to intimate to him that not being "one of us" he was not privileged to use the room into which he had followed me, and so get rid of him. But again, my suspicions might be wrong; we had been exceedingly chatty during our journeying together; he was exceedingly amusing. I might in my suspicion be doing him injustice, and by so acting deprive myself of a very agreeable companion. Whilst the subject of these speculations was up-stairs seeing a bedroom, I interrogated mine host whether or not he knew the stranger who had arrived with me by the mail. Boniface was somewhat surprised at the question: he thought that the gentleman with the little luggage was a friend of mine; and I verily believe my question was the cause of a communication being made by the landlord to all the functionaries of the establishment, to keep an eye on the silver spoons and the stranger.

I was engaged looking over a newspaper when my coach companion again entered the room. Advancing to the mirror over the fireplace, to contemplate the tie of his cravat, in a tone of voice as though he had known me as many years as we had been together hours, he addressed me with something like the following:

"Ha! deep in the *Times* I see—what says the *Thunderer* to-day?

Nothing particularly strange or new, I suppose, in foreign or domestic? By-the-way, have you ordered dinner? You have; that's well—a joint at the fire ready in ten minutes; that's better—shall be happy to join you?"

"Most happy," I returned, wondering who the devil the fellow could be. There was a frankness about him, a buoyancy and spirit in his language, and his looks quite irresistible, and by the time that we sat down to dinner I had banished all reserve, and we chatted and laughed again like old friends met together. The stranger seemed to enjoy his dinner.

"Yesterday," said he, "I dined with an antique; one of the old school—how different to this; nothing like enjoying one's ease at an inn. Of formal dinners I'm heartily sick. Are you familiar with Pope's description of one:

> A solemn sacrifice performed in state;
> You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
> So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
> Sancho's dread doctor and his wand were there;
> In plenty starving, tantalised in state;
> And complaisantly help'd to all I hate."

To prolong our sitting, after dinner I proposed desert and another bottle. What was it that my lively companion did not know? What was the subject with which he was not quite at home? What the theme around which his wit did not illumingly play? He was evidently enjoying a full flow of animal spirits; and I doubt not, that finding I appreciated the many good things he gave utterance to, was an additional inducement for him to show me the extent of the store from which he so prodigally drew.

He was a strange compound, and puzzled me not a little.

"I'm not a commercial man," said he, "but I like the commercial body and the commercial room."

"You are aware, then," I returned with a smile, "that our table always commands the pick of the larder and the best bin."

"I know it well; but that is not the inducement, believe me; no, it is the variety of character one meets with. I have passed very agreeable hours in the commercial room, and met with many very pleasant, fine-hearted fellows amongst the body—some, it is true, rather the reverse, but I must confess they appear to be very few."

I need scarcely say, that I was pleased to hear my companion thus speak of our brotherhood; and I told him, in return, that he did but justice to the body generally in the remarks he had made.

And here let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the compliment paid to us by a public writer—an author who revealed his genius when he wrote "Virginius" and the "Hunchback"—James Sheridan Knowles. Here let me declare, that he has not done the body more than justice in the eulogiums passed by him on the commercial men generally, his knowledge arising from his avowed enjoyed companionship with them. Geoffrey Crayon, when in England, mingled with the commercials; he also speaks of them, but merely with a pleasant conceit, comparing them to the knights of old, and ably illustrating the simile. But since the gentle Geoffrey's first wandering in England, a

change, a very great change, has taken place in the brotherhood; and were he to write another sketch-book in this country, I am inclined to believe that Irving's fascinating pen would treat more largely of commercial travellers as a now intelligent body, seeing much of the world, and whose lives are, indeed, as full of strange adventure as the errant knights of old.

They who, guided by the general excellence of *Blackwood's Magazine*, may have formed an opinion of the commercial body by a series of articles which, under the title of "The Northern Circuit," some time ago appeared in its pages, would probably be surprised to hear, that however much of amusement the writer wrought out of the subject, he therein displayed complete ignorance of the customs of commercial travellers whom he selected as fit vehicles for the fictitious coining of his brain, under the semblance of true pictures of the realities of life. As far as they answered his purpose, he might just as well have chosen the members of the Bullock Smithy Tripe and Treacle Club, or the Sons of Harmony, who vegetate in the classic purlieus of Chowbent.

Had the author of the "Northern Circuit" written on the subject three parts of a century ago, his articles, even then, would have been a libel upon the class selected as a fit subject for his efforts at wit; at the present period, the least of their qualifications is that they can correctly speak their mother tongue, denied them by the author in question, who puts language into their mouths that would disgrace a dustman; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, there is not one out of every hundred of the thirty thousand commercial travellers in Great Britain who is not sufficiently conversant with letters to detect the great inferiority of the papers alluded to, as compared with the general contents of *Blackwood*. Indeed, I am inclined to believe the articles were admitted to that able publication through an error, or that great Christopher had such a fit of the gout at the time, that, had they been submitted to him, he would have cried "Pass" to the lucubrations of Dubbs the Dustman.

To return to the Unknown.

Our wine and filberts finished, my companion proposed a walk, to which I assented. He took my arm with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance, and forth into the streets of S—— we sallied. As we strolled through the busy thoroughfares, my companion seemed to have entered on a field in which his conversational powers were peculiarly fitted for display. There was point and originality in all his observations; an occasional vein of sarcasm revealing itself in his commentaries on men and things which, together with dottings of philosophical speculation amidst his hilarity, surprised me not a little, and left me more than ever puzzled with the Unknown.

Well do I remember how heartily I laughed at the remarks which he made on a big six-foot fellow, who, in a confectioner's shop, we saw handing some of the minute sweets to a little child, which could scarce reach the top of the counter with the equivalent; and also how readily I joined him in the sudden change of his manner, when, a little after, in a tone of sympathy, he stopped to express his pity for a poor pale-faced woman who was staggering towards us beneath a heavy burden, with a little half-starved urchin walking by her side, and holding on by her dress.

Although regarding my companion with a favourable eye, knowing

pretty well what human nature is capable of, I did not cease to hold myself prepared for any revelation which would prove that his designs were sinister. Thus on my guard, I turned suddenly round from gazing at some object to which he had directed my attention in an opposite direction, and, with the colour mantling my cheeks, caught him, reader, not attempting an exploration of the interior of my pocket, but in the act of thrusting some money into the hand of the pale-faced, half-starved-looking child, which I have mentioned as trotting by the side of the heavily-burdened woman.

At this moment a number of people who had been witnessing the performance of an illusionist, who designated himself the Wizard of the South, issued from the Town-Hall, where the exhibition had taken place; and as they came thronging up the street towards where we stood, my strange companion, suddenly quitting my arm, hastened to and ascended some stone steps, which, basing a lamp-post, occupies the centre of the market-place of S——. Here, throwing himself into orator-like attitude, with a loud and clear voice, to my great amazement, I heard him address the advancing crowd with something like the following:

"Inhabitants of S——. Ladies and Gentlemen,—Hear me for my cause, and listen that ye may be edified. Tell me what went ye in there to see?" the speaker, with these words, pointing with his walking-stick to the old Town-Hall. "What, I say, went ye in there to see?—a wizard, a magician, a master in the science of 'presto pass?' No, no! a fameless follower in the footsteps of the gifted—as far from a mastership in the mysteries of magic as he is from the mountains of the moon,—a copyist of myself; yes, ladies and gentlemen, in me behold the true wizard—the Wizard of the North!"

By this time the strange gentleman with the silver-mounted walking-stick had gathered around him a score or two of hearers, and, seemingly bent upon playing the mob-orator, elevating his voice to a higher pitch, he continued to address them, whilst the crowd was fast increasing from all the neighbouring thoroughfares. Beginning to entertain suspicions as to his sanity, I took care to mingle with the mob, thinking it not at all unlikely that he might appeal to me as a brother conjuror, or in some other way introduce me to their notice. After informing his hearers that he intended to make his opening night on the following Monday, and that it was his custom to admit the townspeople the first night gratis,—which, I may remark, obtained him a hearty cheer,—he proceeded to give an account of what his performances consisted; the astounding description throwing completely into the shade the programme of the other wizard, who was a mere mortal, and whose highest pretensions in the science of metamorphoses was, he understood, the mere simple and contemptible achievements of changing an orange into a lady, and a wheel-barrow into a silver-spoon.

Having my despatches to write, and but little time to spare to save the post, I was compelled to leave my eccentric companion in the midst of his harangue; a loud roar of laughter from the crowd, which reached me as I turned the corner of the market-place, intimating that the orator was treating them to a specimen of that witty vein, the richness of which I had been struck with, in his conversations with me and in his observations generally.

Expecting the return of the stranger, on finishing my letters I remained in the hotel; he did not, however, appear; and, after sitting up near an hour beyond my usual time, I retired to rest, much wondering who my late eccentric companion could be, and what had become of him. By an early coach, next morning, I left S—— for W——. The day was just breaking as we rattled through the silent and deserted streets; and, as we passed by the spot where I had last seen the self-dubbed wizard holding forth to the natives, I half regretted that I had not tarried to see more of him, and much wondered whether I should ever meet again one of whom so aptly might be applied the line,

Whom folly pleases, and whose follies please.

About a year had passed away; my meeting with the Unknown had almost faded from my memory, when the circumstances related were vividly brought to my recollection, and all my former curiosity awakened, by meeting, in the principal street of B——, once again the gentleman with the silver-mounted walking-stick, the mock wizard, and mob-orator.

His greeting was hearty, and, that he had not forgotten the where and when of our former encounter, he soon evinced, by laughingly inquiring whether I had lately been to S——, where the organ of wonder was so generally distributed amongst the natives.

"Why did you desert me," said he. "I looked for you when I had finished my address to the people, but you had vanished. However, we have met again, and I am glad to see you."

The Unknown wished me to dine with him, which I declined, but promised to call upon him, in the course of the evening, at the hotel where he was staying. Having a business engagement at the time of our meeting, I begged to be excused, hurrying away; and, with the understanding that I was to call upon him as mentioned, we parted.

It had been my intention to visit the theatre, to see a favourite play that was to be performed that evening; nor did I abandon the design on account of meeting my quondam friend. Curious though I was to learn something more about that very puzzling individual, I decided upon calling only at his hotel on my way to the theatre, when I would propose his accompanying me to see the performance. Accordingly, about half-past six, I made my appearance at the George, and inquired for him at the bar. Describing the gentleman I sought, being utterly unacquainted with his name, I was conducted by the waiter, not to the coffee, commercial, or a private room, but, to my great amazement, to a spacious and brilliantly-lighted ball-room, in which were placed a formidable array of tables, covered with decanters, glasses, and a splendid desert. Flanking the tables sat the partakers of their garnishing, some fifty or more, whilst near the fire a group of some half dozen others were similarly enjoying themselves, all listening to—who should the reader suppose? but my friend of the silver-mounted walking-stick. "Going, going, for the last time," in the well-remembered tones of his voice, caught my ear, as the door was thrown open for my entrance, followed by the descent of the hammer, accompanied with a sudden "Gone!" as his eyes fell upon me standing in the doorway. I was hesitating whether to advance or retreat on such an unexpected scene being presented to me, when, immediately following the auctioneer's knock-down of the last lot,

he stopped the proceedings to hail and invite me to take a seat, at the same time challenging me to a glass of wine. Somewhat annoyed at this marked attention, and resolving shortly to withdraw, after taking wine with the man of the hammer, during which process every eye in the room was turned upon me, I took a seat in the immediate vicinity of the door, a silent and wondering spectator of the scene.

"An auctioneer after all, neither more nor less," I ruminated, rather disappointed, I must confess, having fully prepared myself to discover in my quondam friend something decidedly villanous or great; but, an auctioneer!—the interest I had formerly taken in him, together with my curiosity, I need scarcely say was very considerably abated. Wines and cigars were the articles offered to the competition of the company. Sales were rapidly made; wine was freely pushed about; the auctioneer, whilst running up the biddings, interspersing his remarks on the qualities of the articles offered, with anecdotes, short stories, and with sallies, raising roars of laughter from the seemingly delighted company.

"He is a wonderful fellow," I thought, as I sat listening to the proceedings, "and were such a man placed in a different sphere, the world would justly pronounce him to be a genius. It occurred to me that I ought to make a purchase, or at least a bidding, for some of the lively auctioneer's stock ere I retired from the room; and three boxes of cheroots being put up in a little time after my entrance, I entered into competition with the others. Scarce had my offer of advance over the first bidder left my lips, when the auctioneer, at once recognising my voice, with a laughing look at me, cried, "Sixpence for duty—they are yours;" and down went the hammer. Why he should have conferred so marked a favour on me—the bidding only just commenced, having reached about half of what the boxes would have realised had he allowed further competition—I could not well understand. Following the descent of the hammer, I observed the auctioneer leaning from his elevated position to speak, as I judged, in explanation to an individual who sat beneath him. I may here observe that my purchase ultimately proved an unmistakable bargain, the cheroots being about the best that I ever had the pleasure of smoking, or of presenting to a brother lover of the weed.

I was not allowed to withdraw quietly from the room. The auctioneer, to my great astonishment, staying his proceedings to induce me to remain, our parley being carried on almost at the top of our voices, as almost the full length of the spacious apartment separated us. This was sufficiently unpleasant; and I felt it to be more so when the man of the hammer, finding that he could not prevail upon me to stay, pressed me to promise that on my return from the theatre I would look in, by which time, he said, they should have finished business, and commenced harmony. I succeeded at length in getting away, with a sort of half-promise that I would look in, as he had so pressingly requested me, and then proceeded to consign my purchase to the care of the hostess of the George, until I should send for it on the morrow.

"An auctioneer!" I ejaculated, whilst walking down the lobby of the inn; "and not one of the first-class either. Had he been a seller of mansions instead of Manillas, and woods instead of wines!—Well, I might have discovered earlier that his talents were of that order which is

ever passed in the race by sober mediocrity—a deuced clever and very agreeable fellow withal. He has probably been in a position," I reflected, "to appreciate the value of a bit of advice given by Juvenal—

> If not a sous in thy lank purse appear,
> Go, mount the rostrum, and turn auctioneer."

"I see you have been making a purchase, sir," said the hostess of the George, as I approached her with my boxes to consign them to her care.

"Quite unexpectedly, I assure you," was my reply. "Pray does the gentleman up-stairs often make use of the large room to sell by auction?"

"Oh, yes, sir, twice a year regularly. He has been in the habit of coming here—let me see—for the last fifteen years."

"Fifteen years, madam!" I exclaimed; "excuse me, there must, surely, be some mistake on your part, for, if I am not very much mistaken, the auctioneer, at the utmost, cannot be more than eight-and-twenty!"

"Oh, sir," returned the landlady, "you mean the gentleman who is selling again to-night for Mr. ——."

"Selling for him! then he is in Mr. ——'s employ; or his partner, perhaps?"

"Dear me, no, sir; he is quite a stranger to Mr. ——, and to all of us; but quite a gentleman, I am sure."

"You surprise me, indeed," was my rejoinder. "Pray how is it that he has turned auctioneer?"

"I really don't know; but last night he persuaded Mr. —— to allow him to take his place for a short time, and he continued selling the greater part of the evening. Why, sir, my husband tells me that he disposes of twice as many goods as Mr. —— himself. Last night he did it for his own amusement, and to-night is selling again to oblige Mr. ——. He is a great favourite, and he kept yesterday's company from breaking up until this morning."

The landlady of the George also informed me that he had been staying with them about three days—that they were unacquainted with his name, but repeating her former observation, she knew he was quite a gentleman.

During my visit to the theatre, more than once my thoughts reverted to the George and the amateur auctioneer; and it was somewhere about eleven o'clock, when, having had enough of the country drama, I quitted the theatre to join again the strange gentleman of the silver-mounted walking-stick.

On entering the auction-room I found the business over, the desert removed from the tables, the stock in trade of the auctioneer, with the various lots of purchases, piled up at one end of the room. Spirits had taken the place of wine, the company undiminished in number, and in the chair my quondam friend.

In the vice-chair was seated the first comedy of the theatre, whose really talented performance I had been so recently witnessing.

The chairman expressed himself as delighted at my return, inviting me to a seat by his side, also informing me that I was just in time to

hear the vice-president's second contribution to the harmony of the evening. "You will enjoy the scene," said the Unknown, whispering to me; "watch me get up the steam to the express speed."

It was indeed a jovial gathering. Many were there who "had more than once heard the chimes at midnight," whose rosy gills bespoke them no chickens at a carouse, and who had many a time and oft been amongst the dead men, down.

In the intervals of songs and recitations, anecdotes were told, healths were drunk, bumpers drained, speeches made, and the hip, hip, hurrah! and one cheer more, must have intimated to the passers-by without that they were having another jovial night at the George.

If the Unknown before had, by his originality, singularity, and varied acquirements, interested, he now certainly astonished me. Into the spirit and hilarity of the hour he appeared to enter fully and freely; his vivacity seeming, with the approach of the sma' hours, to increase rather than diminish, his humour being inexhaustible. How often that night did he indeed set the table in a roar!—how often indeed did "Bravo, Mr. Chairman!" resound from all parts of the spacious room. Whilst I was present, they drank his health twice over in bumpers, and not unlikely repeated it after my departure, for they seemingly knew not a better way of testifying their admiration.

It was long past midnight when I withdrew, leaving them in the midst of a "three times three," given with a vigour which proved most unmistakably that the steam was, indeed, fully up, and that the spirit of the revellers had in no way diminished.

The following night, the amateur auctioneer resumed his post, conviviality succeeding, as before, an extensive sale of goods. I did not attend the gathering, but learned the particulars on the morning following from the chatty, good-natured hostess of the George, who at the same time informed me that the Unknown had taken his departure by the early morning mail. From her liege lord, to whom I also spoke on the subject, I anticipated learning something more of the departed guest, but was soon satisfied that he was quite as ignorant as his better half on the subject.

"He is a noble fellow, whoever he is," said the landlord, winding up his meagre account of the subject of my inquiries; "a thorough trump as ever lived, and the cleverest fellow, by long chalks, of all that he had ever seen."

It appeared that the stranger had avowed his intention of departing a day earlier, but, partly to oblige the auctioneer, and partly to oblige his host, he had been induced to remain and give one night more.

Whilst receiving intelligence of his departure, it occurred to me that when we last parted, he had shaken me by the hand with more than usual earnestness, and instead of "Good night!" his parting salute had been "Good-by!"

Some dozen times had I been to the place where I first met with the mysterious stranger, and also to the town where his auctioneering freak had been indulged in, without again meeting with or hearing more about him. All my inquiries were fruitless, though well remembered and often talked about by mine host of the George and his guests, the object of his visit to the town and himself were still wrapped in mystery, which there seemed

very little probability of ever being cleared up. Frequently had I related the circumstances attending my meeting with the Unknown, and, as may be supposed, many and various were the opinions expressed by my hearers as to who and what the stranger might have been.

Near three years had passed away; I had taken my last journey and retired from the road, when, after having for some time given up all expectation of such an event, I was unexpectedly gratified by seeing once again my strange coach companion and amateur auctioneer.

Visiting one evening with a friend one of the principal London theatres, soon after the performance had commenced my attention was attracted from the stage by the entrance of a party of three to the boxes not far from where we were seated. Directing my friend's attention to them with not a little interest, I inquired if they were known to him, the features of one of them being strikingly familiar to me.

"The elder of the two gentlemen," replied my friend, who was a Londoner, and well acquainted with the persons of most of the notables of the day, is the eminent philosopher —— ——, and that is his lady."

"Yes, but the other; the younger man?"

"That is ——," was the reply.

Reader, judge my surprise. In the latter, a genius of whom his country is justly proud, and shall be for ever and aye, I recognised my friend of the coach; the gentleman with the silver-mounted walking-stick—the Unknown, who, at various times of our companionship, I had conjectured to be a commercial traveller, lawyer, doctor, lunatic, swell-mob's-man, and auctioneer! And there he sat before me, the master-mind, the wizard whose wonderful creations had so often won from me—ay, and myriads besides me—smiles and tears; the magician who so often had struck the chords of the wide world's heart, and revealed how wonderful, indeed, is man and genius together.

They who have thus far accompanied me through this hasty sketch will readily believe it was with not a little gratification, that in the course of the evening, observing the glass of my old acquaintance directed to the box where I sat, I believed he had recognised me. And such, indeed, was the case.

In the lobby of the theatre we shook hands again that night, and that night, accompanied by my friend, it was mine to enjoy the society of the gifted genius, no more the Unknown, at his "ain fireside."

THE COURT-MARTIAL.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

Chapter I.

"Come, George, my dear boy, it is really quite time for you to go. It only wants twenty minutes to nine, and you have a long way to walk. Here are your gloves and comforter, and a bit of gingerbread for your luncheon, for it is piercing cold for you, my darling."

"It is not colder for him than for any other schoolboy, I suppose, Mrs. Thornton? But you always must make more fuss about your children than other people; as if, forsooth, they were all born to large, ready-made fortunes, instead of having to work like slaves for their daily bread, as I am compelled to do."

"I wish, my dear husband, you would not make a point of reflecting on my conduct to our children on every trivial occasion; it is very painful to me to hear your sarcastic remarks. Do pray allow me to render them comfortable while I have it in my power, poor things! and, doubt not that, when called upon, they will exert themselves to do as much credit to the station in which it shall please the Almighty to place them, as our dear Richard has hitherto done, of whom you, or any father, *must* be proud. I truly grieve that you are obliged to labour so incessantly, indeed I do; but, alas! so large a family as ours demands constant and anxious toil to bring up even commonly respectable. You know, David, that I am neither indolent nor extravagant,—only let us struggle to give our boys a tolerable education, and then they must assist themselves."

"Very likely, when you do all you can to make them as delicate and fastidious as any fine gentleman nursed in ease and luxury. Look at that boy, with his pale face and reedy figure; what will he ever be fit for, I should like to know? But he may thank you for that girlish effeminacy, with your eternal wrappers and sweet cakes."

"Richard was just as pale and delicate before he went to sea; yet how strong and robust he has since become."

"Ah! because one has happened to turn out tolerably well, you fancy the rest must do the same."

"I hope it; I fervently hope and pray for it."

"Yes, but not in the same manner. I made an effort, much against my own private conviction, to gratify your maternal pride, in placing Richard in a profession much above anything he was born to expect; but there my folly shall end. My other boys shall all go into decent trades; so that, if they fail, they shall not be a lofty mark for the slow unmoving finger of scorn to point witheringly at. Hence do not buoy yourself up with the idea that I mean to educate one single one of them out of their sphere, teaching them to want that which they never can obtain, and making them dissatisfied with their actual situation, and almost hating

the parents who brought them into such a pitiful and distasteful world. This is the very last year I will pay for that boy's schooling, so you had better advise him to make the most of it. Christmas twelvemonth I shall apprentice him, that you may rely on."

The loud startling knock of the general postman interrupted this distressing domestic wrangle; and, whilst his morose father turned towards the parlour-door in expectation of a letter, poor little George, the innocent cause of it, hastily kissed his ill-treated mother, slipped the gingerbread into his pocket, and stole noiselessly out of the room, not daring even to glance at his irascible sire; and wiping away a large tear from either eye with the sleeve of his jacket as he hurried past the only servant they kept, who was ascending the stairs with a letter in her hand, as she said, "For master," as she held it in George's face.

"That *is* from Richard!" exclaimed Mrs. Thornton, eagerly, as the girl entered with it; whilst her heart, so lately depressed by the unkindness of her husband, now throbbed with delight in anticipation of the agreeable information which the letters of this her eldest and much-beloved son invariably contained.

Mr. Thornton broke the seal, and still standing in the half angry, half irresolute attitude he had assumed when he began to expostulate with his wife, as he was mildly pleased to term his cruel and unjust reflections, commenced perusing it to himself, whilst Mrs. Thornton furtively watched his countenance (as she was ever obliged to do) with the most anxious intensity, to glean from the varying emotions it portrayed the hopes and fears she might reasonably entertain for her brave and handsome absent young sailor.

Scarcely had her husband reached the bottom of the first page ere he started in the most violent agitation, turning deadly pale, and crushing up the letter as if dreading to finish its contents.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed his wife, flinging down the towel with which she was drying the breakfast things, and approaching him; "what is the matter? Is he ill? oh! tell me the worst at once; is our Richard ill?"

"Why should you imagine *that*? Is there nought save sickness to wring a father's heart for a son?"

"Oh! what besides sickness, or perhaps, although Heaven forbid, danger, could occasion this terrible tempest of passion in you, David?"

"Disgrace!"

"Disgrace!—what, to my Richard? Impossible!"

"You had better read the precious letter yourself, since you do me the honour to doubt my veracity."

"Oh! do not be angry with me at such a time, I implore you. I did not mean to offend you. Oh, my dear, dear husband! if you could but comprehend a mother's feelings, you would not be so easily irritated at any unguarded expression."

"Then, I suppose, a father's feelings go for nothing in your estimation, because there is less romantic parade about them?"

"Oh! no, no, no! But what *does* our poor boy say?"

"Read; for I have not patience to repeat the absurd folly, nay, in all probability, *ruin* of his conduct."

Mrs. Thornton took the letter with a trembling hand and sinking heart; and seating herself at a distance from her husband, so as to con-

ceal its immediate effects upon her as much as possible from his keen and unsympathising observation, read as follows:

"H.M. Sloop, *Undaunted*, Plymouth.

"My dear Father,—I confess that I sit down to address you with some slight degree of reluctance, which is so novel a sensation for me to experience on such an occasion, that I will not promise much, either for the fluency of style, or happily-rounded periods of this letter. The truth is, I apprehend, I have got into a bit of a scrape; that is nothing, mind, which can be attended with any ulterior consequences of an unpleasant nature, but which is, still, rather annoying to me, as, I fear, it will be both to yourself and my dear mother. However, I will at once state the simple facts, lest you should be induced to form an erroneous opinion of the affair, from the garbled accounts of it which, in all probability, you will shortly see in the public papers. A few days before we received sailing orders to quit the bleak and inhospitable shores of Norway for dear Old England, William Vernon, a gallant young midshipman, came unexpectedly into a large fortune from the death of an uncle, who always threatened to cut him off with a shilling for obstinately entering the navy against his express wish, but to whom he declared, at parting, that 'he would live a Nelson, and *die* a Nelson.' Nothing, therefore, would suit the generous-hearted fellow, but giving a regular champagne breakfast, *sub rosâ*, to his brother midshipmen, doing me the fatal honour of considering me among the number, as I am not yet *rated*, although acting as third lieutenant on board.

"I did not object to join the madcaps, as I undoubtedly ought to have done, trusting to my habitual temperance to preserve me from any excess; for, as you know, I might without any affectation pass for a pattern disciple of the renowned apostle of sobriety. However, to my amazement and chagrin, after a few glasses of the exhilarating nectar, I felt myself completely overcome; no doubt in a great measure owing to that very abstemiousness, the unusually early hour, the sundry loyal toasts and sentiments, which were, of course, drank in bumpers, with uproarious applause, and the sincere and unanimous congratulations which I personally received on my own speedy promotion—all, all combined to partially intoxicate one naturally of a sanguine and hilarious temperament; so that, on re-ascending to the deck, from the close and heated atmosphere of a small crowded room, into the clearer and more rarefied air of a keen frosty afternoon, to keep the from four to six watch, no wonder that my brain began to reel, my legs to become powerless under me, while a deathlike sickness caused me to stagger, indeed, like a drunken man, rendering me totally insensible, at the moment, of the awful responsibility reposed in me—of the risk I ran of disgrace and ignominy, should I be found wanting in duty on such an important occasion—to all, in fact, save getting rid of the splitting headache and horrible nausea, which was quite intolerable; so, hurrying down to my berth, and pressing my throbbing temples hard on the bare table, I soon sank into a profound and heavy slumber.

"Oh! my father, how delusive, how treacherous, did that slumber prove to your unconscious son! How completely did it steep my every sense into the Lethean forgetfulness of violated orders, breach of confidence, insubordination, and contumely. How exquisite were the sensations with which it filled my frame! How enchanting the visions with

which it filled my soul! I know not how long I had yielded to that Elysian slumber, but I was aroused from it, with what appeared to me a suddenness as painful as it was startling, by several persons thronging suffocatingly around me, some, hastily and angrily uttering my name, while others laid their hands heavily on my shoulder, the more fully and effectually to awaken me. At first, I was quite incapable of comprehending anything relative to the cause of this tumult and confusion, for I had been dreaming of my early tranquil home, the home of my childhood, and almost expected to behold my mother bending over me, as was her holy wont, to bestow the fond and fervent kiss, which ever hailed me gladly back to the consciousness of existence from the temporary semblance of death which even the serene slumber of childhood too strongly typifies. But the words, 'Arrest,' 'Neglect of duty,' 'Derogatory conduct,' and 'Court-martial,' caught my ears, and, at once sobering me, I started up, exclaiming,

"'What is the matter, gentlemen?—what about arrest?—court-martial?—derogatory conduct? I am utterly bewildered.'

"'Why, Mr. Thornton,' replied Mr. Roberts, the first-lieutenant, 'I am sorry to inform you, that, in consequence of the captain having discovered that you were drinking in the midshipmen's berth this morning, and also missing you from the watch, I have received orders to place you under arrest, which is, I do assure you, a most painful duty for me to perform to a promising young officer like yourself, and one I have the highest esteem and regard for. However, I trust you will do me the justice to admit that I have no alternative, and will not, therefore, consider I am influenced by the slightest personal animosity; indeed, my dear Thornton, I ardently wish this one thoughtless act had escaped notice, as I sadly fear it must lead to a court-martial, despite the many brilliant ones which ought to shed a counteracting lustre on the culpability of one moment of unintentioned wrong.'

"This opinion, I grieve to say, has been confirmed, and a court-martial is to be held on my conduct very shortly; but only out of mere form, I imagine, for surely, my father, those in power would never think of visiting this, my first, and certainly, all things considered, most venial offence, with any penalty beyond a severe reprimand to which I should bow with all due humility and contrition; for, from the hour on which I entered the glorious service, until that fatal morning, I defy one single charge to be brought against me which could, in the remotest degree, tarnish the reputation of your son. Who can deny, but that I was ever the first to seek the post of danger, and the last to quit it—that I was patient under privations, indifferent to fatigue, regardless of climate, obedient and deferential to my superiors, kind and affable to my inferiors, ready and willing to assist and oblige all? My whole and sole aim being to do honour to my country, myself, and you, that you might have no reason to repent of the sacrifices it cost you to allow me to follow the inclination which was, from boyhood, indomitable.

"Do not then fear for me, my father, for I cannot fear for myself; for man is not so tyrannical to his fellow-man as to blast with one breath of his nostrils the hopes of years—the anticipations of a life—the expectations of a soul yet thirsting for glory, yet insatiate for renown. Oh, my father! my dear father! let me entreat of you to break this sad affair cautiously and tenderly to my poor mother, for her heart is sensitive

in the extreme, and her hopes for me, alas! as unbounded. Tell her that the Christmas-day—so near the first I have had the felicity of spending in my native land for the last seven years—will not be gloomed by even the shadow of misfortune or obloquy resting on her Richard; but that he will, after his acquittal, beg to be allowed to pass it at *home* (how the mere term kindles up my very soul!), in the bosom of his family, to enliven the long evenings with the accounts of his wild adventures and miraculous escapes, the while her dear eye will glisten with a tear of thankful rapture as it gazes on the happy narrator of such daring exploits; and you, although smiling with secret pride at hearing them, shall still bid me be silent, lest the younger boys, who are also listening to me with glowing cheeks and panting hearts, should be seduced to follow the fascinating profession of a sailor.

"Oh! my father! what can be equal to such a moment? Would it were the present. But I have not long to wait for its realisation now, as this is the eighteenth of December. God bless you all until then—God bless you all until then, and for ever

"Your warmly attached, and most affectionate son,

"Richard Thornton.

"P.S. Love to all hands—those I already know, and those whose fraternal acquaintance I have still to make; for, in seven years, your olive-branches must have spread considerably. You see, I conclude my letter cheerfully. But ah! my father! the heart—the heart!"

Chapter II.

"Well, madam, have you finished it at last? Pray, what do you think of your faultless paragon of a son, now? I think you must admit that a young man, who confesses to having been brutally intoxicated in the middle of the day, is not quite the infallible character your blind affection led you to imagine him. Yet this is the bright ideal which was to shed a lustre on the penury in which he has involved us, and to reflect a glorious example on the little pauper brothers and sisters, reduced to beggary for his sake. So much for making one's eldest son a *gentleman!*"

"Mr. Thornton! David!" sobbed out the tortured woman, "for the love of God do not give way *now* to the trying acrimony of your temper. There are times when the meekest and most enduring nature would be—must be—exasperated beyond the limits of even Christian forbearance at its cutting taunts; and this is one. Let us, rather, as persons mutually and holily interested in the future well-being of a beloved object, lay aside every other consideration, banish every other feeling, forget every other concern, for the more momentous, the more paramount one of snatching a child from impending ruin. Oh, my husband! my dear, *dear* husband! let us endeavour to rescue our poor boy at any cost. Let us strive, as if confident God was striving with us, and he *will* be saved. Surely, David, surely, my husband, such an effort ought to be looked on between us only as a labour of love indeed. Oh! would that I could but for one brief moment inspire you with the terror, the anxiety, of this aching heart! Would that I could rekindle in your remembrance but one transient

flash of that extinguished light of connubial love, when it was not a task to give the wife of your bosom pleasure, when your dearest study was to evince the unabated affection you felt for that then most happy wife! Alas! alas! never have I done one thing to forfeit that precious, that still most prized affection. Oh, David! would that I could make you understand that the very penury into which we are so deeply sunk ought to strengthen the silken bonds which early love wove around our hearts! For what have the poor, save that, to support and console them under their manifold privations and trials? Nothing, nothing, *nothing*. Oh! if you felt thus, instead of chiding me for my motherly fondness, my motherly devotion, you would fold me to that too long estranged bosom, and, while you kissed away my tears of surprise and gratitude, you would applaud my maternal conduct as a shining virtue; you would promise me your assistance and encouragement on every occasion where I could display that virtue, glorying in the love I feel for *your* offspring, in lieu of being so strangely, so unnaturally jealous of it as you are. In fact, like me, you would not rest until that love, awakening the divine sympathy which once united our hearts, devised a way for our boy to escape from his present fearful thrall."

"All you say is very eloquent, and very pathetic," replied the imperturbable man, totally unmoved by this earnest appeal to his better feelings; "but, unfortunately, it wants the very necessary, although vulgar, ingredient of common sense; for, in the first place, to rebut the charge of being unnaturally jealous of your maternal affection, I maintain that that jealousy is perfectly *natural*, for it is neither flattering nor consonant to a husband's feelings to find himself a mere cipher in his own house—a mere bread-making machine, kept constantly at work to support those who have not the grace to appreciate his paternal toil. I admit that a woman must and *ought* to love the helpless and dependent beings committed by the Almighty to her tenderest care, but she should make it a more delicate, a more generous compact, and let a man feel, at least, that he is of equal importance in its due and dear observance. You complain of want of sympathy; but you, and you alone, have alienated it from this once placable and yielding heart. Again, unnatural as you may deem me, my *general* love for our children urges me to make a stand against the *individual* case of peril in which one of them is involved, for why should his brothers and sisters suffer to secure Richard from the consequences of his own imprudence? This is but cold reasoning to one so impulsive and excitable as you, Mrs. Thornton, but it is the only line of argument which will prevent our falling down the precipice with him. In truth, why should I further impoverish myself for him, or, indeed, for any one of the children who are studiously trained to neglect and despise their father?"

"What! *our* children? What an unjust, what a barbarous accusation! What a weak, unmanly subterfuge to evade the critical juncture which now challenges your fatherly pride and tenderness! Never under heaven did more dutiful, more affectionate children breathe."

"To you, I grant; but what are they to me? Did not that graceless boy go away this very hour without so much as bidding me good morning? Affection!—duty! Truly, I should like to know where it is to be found among them."

"Poor George was afraid to speak to-day; but, in general——"

"Afraid! Who makes him afraid? Who but you? Do I not hear you constantly instilling the pernicious doctrine of 'Never mind your father; he is very angry just now?' But, I tell you, he shall mind his father, whether angry or not—he, and every one of them."

"Oh! I only say so for the sake of peace. Good Heavens! what a life is mine! What has all this crimination, all this raking up of old grievances, to do with poor Richard's case? Why revert to them just now? My conscience tells me that, from the instant I became your wife up to the present time, I have fulfilled my duty righteously and unswervingly; that if I ever offended in it, it was unwittingly; and that if I ever thought of a deviation from it, it is now, when driven to desperation, I may defy your authority, and act on the more imperative, the more overpowering, impulse of maternal solicitude. For, David, I candidly and solemnly confess, that if I cannot accomplish it otherwise, I will undertake the long journey alone, and on foot,—inclement as the weather is,—weak and delicate as I am,—burdened, as I feel myself to be, with another little helpless creature, soon about to call me mother. If we both perish on the road, it will be a merciful release. I shall then go to that God, who will judge me more leniently than you are ever inclined to do; and bear a sinless seraph with me, to console me, in part, for those I leave behind."

"Was ever a man so distracted,—so perplexed? What good could we possibly do by going; without money to bribe, or influence to sway? Would he thank us for the interference which only exposed the abject misery of the parents from which he sprang? Should we not rather injure than serve his cause?"

"Oh! no, no, no! a thousand times, no! I feel as if I could snatch him from the very hands of Fate; I feel that I could, that I *shall*. Oh! assist me, then, my husband! assist me, then, for the memory's sake of our early love,—the sorrows we have shared together,—the hopes we have encouraged. Oh, David! he is lost if we hesitate; for, he is too sanguine,—he must be condemned if we do not plead for him. Let us go, then,—let us go; on my knees I implore you to let us go."

"But how?—how can we go?—who is to find money for even the humblest mode of travelling?—who is to find money for the meanest incidental expenses attending such a journey? At home we can eat our scanty crust, and choke down our prodigal tears, at the same time; but can we do so before the curious and unfeeling strangers, who will stand agape at the misery they behold, yet care not to alleviate? You know very well that to fit that very boy out, nine years since, I raised every farthing I could; and that we are actually sorely pinched in the commonest necessaries, and overwhelmed with paltry debts at this hour, in consequence of that expensive outlay! I cannot do impossibilities; he must take his chance; he was old enough to know better."

"Then, to-morrow morning, I will set off on foot, even if you close this door on my return!"

Intimidated by this threat, Mr. Thornton, seeing how useless it was to endeavour to combat the almost frantic infatuation which had, for the present, usurped the place of reason in the mind of his wife; and, feeling also some considerable anxiety for his son, contrived to anticipate a few

pounds of his moderate income, and, leaving the other children in charge of the willing little slave of a servant, set off to Plymouth with his weeping, but still most buoyant and sanguine wife.

On reaching their destination, they learnt that the court-martial on their son was then being held; so, without losing a moment, or staying for the slightest refreshment, the devoted mother flew to the precious boy, now standing as a criminal before his, perhaps, inexorable judges. When she arrived on board the vessel in which it was assembled, the judge-advocate was actually on the point of reading the sentence; but ere he could utter one word of it, the anxious mother, as if intuitively anticipating the worst, rushed forward, and, leaning against the council-table, she clasped her hands, exclaiming, in a voice of piercing agony,

"Mercy, gentlemen,—mercy for my son! mercy for his mother!"

"Remove the poor lady," said the vice-admiral, with much emotion; "this is really too painful."

"I will not be removed,—I will not stir," she almost shrieked, "until I know, until I avert the doom of my son! Who would dare to lay a finger on a *mother* at such a moment as this? Oh, gentlemen, take heed what you do! remember that, on the verdict you now pronounce, depends the future well-being or destruction of a fellow-creature! Think—for the love of Heaven, think—that with a mere breath you will either elevate the young man before you to the pinnacle of honour which he is so fitted to adorn, or consign him to infamy and disgrace for ever! Dare you then risk so awful a responsibility? Do you not tremble for its consequences? Have you the ferocious courage to send him forth to a scorning and obdurate world, with all the hopes of his youth blighted—all the prospects of his manhood ruined? And for what? For one of the most venial errors of which inconsiderate boyhood can be guilty—the momentary forgetfulness of his duty under circumstances of peculiar excitement. Cannot years of the strictest observance of it atone for so slight a deviation? Cannot years of tried and well-approved conduct purchase the trifling favour, claim so small a reward, as pardon for so very natural an offence? Will you deprive the service of a young, brave, and efficient officer, for that one act of folly, which, I am confident, he never will repeat, but that warned by his present peril, and grateful for the leniency you may now show him, he would devote the remainder of his life to promote the glory of his country, and do credit to those who, when they could evince mercy, did not neglect the heaven-fraught privilege!

"Which among you, sirs? Oh! which among you is so faultless—so nerved with the innate consciousness of never-swerving integrity, that he can, in almost profane defiance of the warning of the Saviour of the universe, raise his hand to cast the first stone at my ill-fated son? Ye, who are still in the strength and vigour of life, suffer memory to run back to the days of your youth; and then, only listening to the voice of conscience, admit that even graver errors were committed by you, which yet, not being brought to condign punishment, like my poor boy's, neither tarnished your reputation nor blasted your fortune! And ye—oh! ye, who are nearer to that period when ye will require mercy yourselves, when ye will stand as criminals to be judged, suffer justice to rend the veil of self-love, with which age envelops the time-chilled heart, and view it

again, with all its deep scars of old and fiery passions, its unresisted temptations, its unvisited offences; and, humbled by the conviction of the fallibility of your own nature, and thankful for its escape from public exposure and consequent ignominy, extend the benign influence of that truly saving conviction to the unfortunate being who, although he has less erred, has fallen under the heaviest infliction of mortal turpitude!

"God knows—God *only* knows, whether I am serving the cause of my son, or not; but, gentlemen, my whole soul is in it, and who can blame a mother for any unintentional omission of respect or deference, when intent only on attaining an object so paramount in her consideration—her affection—as the acquittal of that precious, that idolised son? Oh, gentlemen! on that noble-minded boy are all my hopes fixed—is all my comfort placed; the certainty of his prosperity has hitherto sustained me through the most incredible hardships and privations, and would have so done uncomplainingly even to the grave. Oh! do not then, by condemning him to obloquy, condemn me, at the same time, to that eternal grief which will admit of no alleviation under heaven—the grief of bewailing a son's unmerited—but, alas! irreparable—disgrace! Oh! if you only knew what I have already gone through, you would not add this most unlooked-for calamity to the weight of my many other insupportable sorrows. Gentlemen, I am a heart-broken woman; so help me, Heaven, I am!"

Overcome by her own feelings, and exhausted by this long and energetic address, the poor mother could only utter once more, "*Mercy,*" ere she fainted in the arms of the wretched son, for whom she had so long pleaded, and pleaded in vain. For the sentence of the court was, that "Richard Thornton, after a most patient and unprejudiced investigation, having been found guilty of intoxication and neglect of duty, be forthwith dismissed her Majesty's service." Which sentence was read to him while his mother still lay in a state of insensibility in his arms.

At that moment they might have read to him the sentence of his immediate execution without creating either terror or surprise. Richard Thornton was totally absorbed in the pitiable situation of that hapless mother—in kissing the cold wan lips, so lately glowing with the fervour of the divinest maternal eloquence—in deluging the pale, sunken cheek with the tears of the holiest gratitude for that maternal exertion to save him—in scanning, with a feeling of unutterable sorrow, the thin and wasted figure, the mean and scanty dress, and all the too certain emblems of that suffering, that poverty she was so deeply sunk in—the suffering and poverty he saw at a glance he was returning to, from the comparative luxury and splendour so recently surrounding him—the suffering and poverty he was going to aggravate and augment.

"Oh, my mother! my well-nigh famished mother, what you must have endured to arrive at this deplorable destitution! God of heaven! what you must have endured for long long years, while I revelled in ignorant and happy enjoyment! My mother, my sacredly-beloved mother! And now—and now I cannot comfort you, I cannot aid you, I can only love and reverence you!"

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

By the Rev. James Bandinel.

Chapter V.

THE FIRST DAY'S HUNT.

By dawn of day on Wednesday, the twentieth of May, in the year seven hundred and seventy-seven, the Princess Alethè and her train, King Alured and his court, and all the guests who were present at the previous ball, stood mounted at the palace-gate, awaiting the signal to start on the hunting expedition already mentioned. They did not, however, wait long, for soon the notes of the joyous horn resounded far and wide, and, formed in due array, the cavalcade set forth.

At the head of her own train, mounted as before on her own milk-white palfrey, rode the princess: a graceful bow thrown over her shoulder; a quiver of light, but extremely sharp arrows hanging from her saddle-bow; a dagger of rich workmanship stuck in her girdle; and a slender, but well-poised spear in her right hand. Her dress, though rich, as befitted her high rank, was simple in the extreme—her only ornament, the Rose, placed in her bosom. Her own knights, divided into several detachments, were strictly charged not to allow the excitement of the chase to lead them from their duty. Scouts were placed in high trees on several eminences, to avoid the possibility of surprise, and the king himself, at the head of a strong force, barred the way to Schreckenstein. It had been decided that, after the conclusion of the tournament, ample vengeance should be taken on Sir Hildebrand; but that it would be doing him too much honour to interrupt the festival on his account.

The rest of the party attached themselves in general either to Sir Edred or Sir Eustace, who took different directions in the chase, whilst the less active either remained near the princess, or joined the troop of Sir Ernest of Arnheim, a noble and valiant knight of more advanced age, who joined to undaunted courage the experience of many seasons, and the wisdom of many years.

The day was beautiful, and the party, with few exceptions, were in high spirits; but the hunting was by no means successful. The denizens of the forest seemed as if forewarned of approaching danger; they either kept out of the way, or fled so suddenly and rapidly from their pursuers as utterly to baffle them. Strange to say, the princess's party was in general the most successful. With her own fair hand she brought down an enormous bird of prey, which had for some time committed great depredations on the neighbourhood, and it was not until her quiver was exhausted, and every arrow had hit its mark, that she gave the signal to retreat.

We are aware that we shall lessen our beautiful princess in the eyes of some of our readers by thus describing her prowess. We, however, paint things, not as they ought to have been, but as they actually were in the eighth century; and if we were disposed to enter into a lengthened defence of the matchless Alethè, we should not find the task one of great difficulty. We should perhaps suggest that the killing birds by a

bow and arrow is more humane and maidenlike than many things connected with the slaughter of shell-fish, the torture of insects, and other equally graceful occupations. We might hint that the humanity of this age not unfrequently consists in avoiding the *sight*, and not the infliction of pain. We might safely assert that the daughter of King Alured would have rather parted with every jewel which she possessed, with every luxury that she had enjoyed from infancy, than that the meanest of her father's subjects should have wanted the necessaries of life. But to our tale.

When the various parties met at the outskirts of the forest of Idruna, it was found that neither Sir Ernest nor Sir Edred had achieved anything worthy of note, whereas Sir Eustace had slain, with his own hand, an enormous bear, long the terror of the neighbourhood. He was, therefore, at once declared the victor of the day, and received on bended knee the sylvan wreath, which the princess placed on his brow. Alice remarked that, as she did so, her hand trembled. Her father only observed that she looked more beautiful than she had ever done before. And they were both right.

And now, after a short interval, the supper again began; and if, as we have duly narrated, the viands were done justice to after the evening's dancing, what must have been the case after a whole day's hunting?

Terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos

—men who can do nothing in the eating line. We think better of ourselves because we eat less than our ancestors; but our thinking so is merely one of the many silly delusions which morbid conceit summons up at its will. Is not the decrease of appetite mainly attributable to the decrease of exercise, and early rising, and energy, and general activity, and to the increase of luxury, and indolence, and vice? and is not its effect seen in the increasing debility of the Teuton race? It is merely the middle term, the connecting link between sin and punishment—between the faults and follies of one generation, and the evils which necessarily follow in the next. There are, however, it must be allowed, many thousands, nay, millions even, in this age and country, who have excellent appetites; the labourer, whose strength is failing him from work and want; the sickly mothers, whose frames waste away whilst, like the pelican, they feed the craving infant with their own life's blood; the peasant lad, who falls into a decline; the peasant girl, whose features, even in their loveliness, show the marks of hunger; the troops of children, whose bright young eyes grow dim, whose gay young voices falter for lack of food. But I forget—my readers belong to the nineteenth century: it hurts their sensibility to hear of such things; especially when, as in the present case, they hear of them from an eye-witness, and cannot, therefore, avoid believing them. So we will proceed.

Mountain after mountain of the good fare, unblushingly devoured by the noble, and ungrudgingly dispensed to the poor, disappeared before the true-hearted Teutons far more rapidly than the Alps before the Carthaginian hero; whilst the happy Eustace, seated beside the beautiful princess, poured into her ear those words, in which love is never visible but always present: and she gave him ample opportunity for so doing, by asking him to tell her of the many distant lands and well-fought fields which he had seen, and by questioning him regarding those acts of chivalry and prowess, the renown of which had long reached her. This

last topic was the only one on which he appeared not to dilate with pleasure; he spoke as little of himself as possible; but whilst doing so, his conversation gave a full idea of his character, just as the sunbeam tells us the brightness and warmth of the orb from which it emanates.

We may well imagine that this scene gave no manner of gratification to Sir Edred, except, indeed, that inseparably connected with the satisfaction of hunger. With flashing eyes the sullen one glared on the happy pair. Darker and darker still his brow became, as each moment rolled on, till his glance, as on the preceding evening, fell on the Rose. Then was he transported with frenzy, his blood seemed molten lead, his brain living fire, and it was with difficulty that he kept his seat till the departure of the princess. At length, however, the more important viands having been despatched, and due interval allowed for partaking of the fruits of the season and handing round the wine-cup, Sir Reginald again reminded the princess that the minstrels were waiting her will; and, with a sigh (a sigh which Eustace heard, but scarcely dared to understand), she selected Lleirwg of Caernarvon. The minstrel obeyed, and sang a lay, in which Druidical mysticism and British nationality were strangely mingled with admiration for the Teuton princess.

As Alethè, after graciously thanking the stranger, departed at the head of her lovely train, Sir Edred (who had caught another glimpse of the Rose as she spoke to the minstrel) rushed wildly into the forest, and pursued his course till he reached the Birthday Knoll.

"It was certainly near here!" said he.

"It was certainly near here!" replied a deep voice.

It might be echo: but he had noticed no echo when there before; and the voice, though like his own, was not precisely the same. Brave and dauntless as he was, he felt at that moment something more like fear than he had ever experienced. He looked around; but he could see nothing, except the varying shadows of the rocks and trees. He listened; but he could hear nothing save the hollow moaning of the night-wind. He gazed upwards: the sky was bright; but clouds were fast gathering on the eastern horizon. He watched them till they had obscured every lamp of heaven.

"Why stayest thou here, Sir Edred?" said he, at length, in a scarcely audible voice. And again the words were repeated.

"Who and what art thou?" cried he; but no answer was given. "Where art thou?" said he, looking strangely round him. The branches of a dark evergreen tree, under whose shelter he was standing, moved convulsively; and a chill, cold air breathed upon his face. He started; but immediately recovering himself, cried out, "Whosoever thou art, I command thee to show thyself!"

The deep voice answered—"*Show* THYSELF!"

"Thou shalt not play with me in this manner!" exclaimed Sir Edred, fiercely; "and yet," added he, in a milder tone, "I cannot force thee to appear, for I know not the spell that rules thee. I must, therefore, beseech thee to aid me in love and vengeance. Only give me what I seek, and I will give thee whatsoever thou desirest. Yes, thou shalt name the price thyself, thyself."

"*Thyself*—THYSELF!" answered the deep voice.

The colloquy (if colloquy it could be called) was now disturbed by the low sound of voices in deep and earnest conference. Sir Edred, not

wishing to be recognised by any of the guests or subjects of Alured, rapidly ascended the dark tree already mentioned, and having ensconced himself in a natural arbour formed by some of the higher boughs, took a quiet survey of the strangers, and listened attentively to their conversation.

He immediately discovered that, with the exception of one captive, they were neither guests nor subjects of his royal host. He at once recognised their leader as Sir Hildebrand of Schreckenstein; for, though the unknightly deeds and magical reputation of that chief had rendered him an object of aversion to men of honour and faith, the knight of Drontheim, who was not very select in the choice of his acquaintances so long as they gave him good cheer, or anything else he might wish for at their hands, had passed some days with him on his way to the court of Alured. And it was the praises which, from common fame, Sir Edred had bestowed upon the beauty of Alethè, that gave rise to the unsuccessful attack described in the second chapter. Sir Hildebrand was of absolutely gigantic dimensions, with strength proportioned to his size; his features were decidedly handsome,—but few, save a sculptor, would have discovered the fact, from the brutal expression which they always bore. His courage and prowess were known, and dreaded, and few were his equals in single combat. He had frequently, indeed, met and defeated three assailants at once.

Behind Sir Hildebrand were six of his retainers—grim-looking ruffians, ready for any atrocity—men who preferred his service to that of less unprincipled lords, from the very love of wickedness. They escorted two prisoners closely bound, the one apparently a Teuton, the other evidently belonging to one of the Mongol tribes, which at that time kept Europe in continual activity.

"Did you not hear a voice, Eric?" said the leader.

"I certainly thought so, most noble baron; but I can see no trace of any one."

"Might he not have concealed himself in yonder thicket? or up that tree?"

"I think it impossible, my lord; but I will see."

And so saying, the attendant commenced mounting the tree in which Sir Edred had secreted himself. The knight was just preparing for a conflict with odds, which, considering that he was without armour, and had no weapons save his short sword and dagger, made the event a question of some interest, when a sound burst upon the ears of the whole company, which immediately arrested their attention. To Edred, it seemed like the roaring of a whirlwind—to Hildebrand, like a royal trumpet close at hand. He immediately fled with his five attendants and two captives, desiring Eric to remain in the tree till his return.

No sooner was the party from Schreckenstein clear off than Sir Edred struck the intruder unexpectedly to the ground, and, springing to the earth, bound him hand and foot, and, having gagged him, bore him off in an opposite direction to that taken by Sir Hildebrand.

In a few minutes that bold freebooter, finding that he had been apparently made the dupe of a false alarm, returned to the spot which he had just quitted, and was greatly astonished at finding not only his follower gone, but the tree itself dwindled down to a moss-grown trunk, from which sprouted one solitary twig, whose dark leaves glimmered ominously in the returning starlight.

"Gods of my fathers!" cried he; "if I have unwittingly trespassed upon ground still sacred to you, forgive the unintentional transgression, and restore his vassal to your faithful worshipper. By the skulls of Valhalla," added he, examining the solitary twig before mentioned, "it is the Zornbaum. Forgive, oh Zernebock! my unintentional violation of thy sacred tree. Thou shalt be appeased, and that without loss of time. Drag forward yon misbeliever; there is nothing so soothing to the wrath of the gods as the blood of a Christian."

Thus saying, he stabbed his German captive to the heart, having placed him so that his life's blood might fall on the roots of the tree. As the dry trunk felt the warm gore it began instantly to revive; and in the space of a few minutes the Zornbaum had shot higher, and spread wider than before.

But to return to Sir Edred. Having reached a safe retreat, he used every means in his power to resuscitate the insensible Eric; and as soon as he opened his eyes informed him, that unless he at once confessed how and why his master had come to the Birthday Knoll, and what meant the appearance of the swarthy captive, he would immediately bear him to Alured's presence, who would, he averred, subject him to the most excruciating tortures. Eric having, under his master's eye, taken part in many such scenes, easily believed his captor, and at once confessed all that he knew of his lord's proceedings and intentions.

"Is that all?" cried Edred, raising his dagger—"all? Answer, villain! your life hangs on the reply."

"All."

"Then die!" and he plunged the weapon into his breast. He then carefully concealed the dead body, aided, as it seemed, by the deep hollow breeze, which rolled the leaves up to the carcase, though ever and anon he was startled by sounds which struck him as half-way between death-groans and sardonic laughter.

Hurrying away from his work, he soon regained the palace of Alured, and succeeded in mingling once more among the guests without exciting any surprise. His absence had, indeed, been noticed by only one person, though its effect had been like the removal of a cloud from a summer sky. All felt gayer and happier; they knew not why. One glance, however, met his inquiringly, as he entered the banquet-hall. Firm, calm, and searching, it fell upon him like a moveless starbeam on a murky pool. It was the glance of Arnold of the Brocken, and he felt its power as he had never felt that of man. Nor did the short remainder of the night's carousal bring him ease. Talk, drink, frown, laugh; do what he would, that eye was always upon him, till in despair he exclaimed,

"Methinks, good minstrel, you seem sadly at a loss for something to do; could you favour us with one of those songs whereof fame speaks so loudly?"

"By all means!" said the king and his uncle, in one breath.

"By all means!" cried the guests at the high table.

"By all means!" chimed in the rest of the assembly.

Arnold smiled, took the harp, and, without preface or prelude, sang the following words, with a full clear voice, fixing his eyes during the whole performance upon Edred's countenance:

Dark and darker grows the night,
  Treading on the shades of even;
Clouded is the moon's fair light;
  Not a star is seen in heaven;—
Chilly does the night-wind blow,
  Murmuring through the shuddering trees;
Harshly does the torrent flow;
  Even the lake is ill at ease.

Wherefore then doth Conrad hie
  Lonely to the sullen wood?—
Would he commune with the sky?—
  Would he parley with the flood?—
Seek not that which none may know!
  Ask not that which none can tell!
Sought he evil—time will show—
  Sought he good—'tis well! 'tis well!

Pass the ale-cup briskly round;
  Pour the flagon, bravely pour,
Till the gale without is drown'd
  By the reveller's joyous roar.
Then to sleep—sleep those who may—
  Conscience calm knows calmest rest!—
Those who love the light of day,
  Sleep the soundest and the best.

"What could yon minstrel have been doing during his long absence from our revel?" said Sir Edred to Sir Gideon, who sat beside him.

"Yon minstrel? Why, he has not left the banquet-hall for a minute's space since he entered it."

"He *has not left the banquet-hall!*" echoed the deep voice.

Sir Edred changed colour; but, observing to his great relief that his companion had not heard it, he added, to cover his mistake,

"I suppose then I must have fallen asleep and dreamt it."

"Do you often walk in your sleep?" said Arnold, who had approached them unobserved.

Sir Edred glared upon him like a caged tiger when irritated by some insult which the bars of his den prevent him from being able to resent. But his glance, bold and fierce as it was, turned aside from the calm blue eye of the minstrel; and, mingling with the throng of departing guests, he retired to bed, but not to rest. For, as he repeatedly tried to close his eyes, the deep voice sounded in his ear, then faded away into a dying groan, swelled into the rustling breeze, and modulated itself into the minstrel's lay.

Chapter VI.

THE SECOND DAY'S HUNT.

The weather, which had been changing for the worse during the last seven or eight hours, became so very bad by sunrise, that all agreed in deeming it necessary for Alethè and her train to remain at home. Even Sir Reginald and his celebrated corps, much as they regretted being deprived of the chase, could not but admit that howling wind, and pouring rain, and a sky so dark that in many parts of the forest it must resemble midnight, except when lighted up as it was every quarter of an hour by an awful flash of lightning, were not suitable to a lovely young princess.

"They will not venture to attack the palace," muttered Sir Edred. "No; that is not part of their plan; besides which, they would be beaten off if they attempted such a thing. Well, it is best and safest as it is."

As it was decided that the princess should remain at home, the king and his guests lost no time in making for the wood; and Alured's scouts having seen nothing of the enemy on the preceding day, it was determined that the king and his troop should join in the hunt.

Whilst the assembled hunters were discussing the details of the chase, a loud bellow was heard; and on looking in the direction whence the sound came, they beheld an enormous urus contending with a stag of proportionate dimensions. The whole assembly raised a shout; and the combatants, being thus warned of their approach, started off in different directions. The king immediately gave chase to the stag; Sir Eustace consequently pursued the urus; their respective parties followed them at full speed, as well as most of those who had yesterday been under Edred's command. As in groups of two, three, and four, they passed that knight at full speed, and he was doubting what he had best do, a wild boar of immense size, with tusks that might have torn an elephant, and eyes that glared hideously, sprung suddenly up from the shade of the Zornbaum, where Edred had concealed himself on the preceding night, and on whose leaves his steed was now browsing, uttered one loud, deep, savage growl, and darted off into a neighbouring thicket.

Sir Edred and his companions instantly followed the animal at full speed, though the path which he took was for some time an extremely difficult one. In fact, path it was none; for the wild boar chose the thickest and most tangled portion of the forest, which of course gave him great advantage, since he could force his way through brushwood and under the drooping branches much more easily than the knights and their chargers. Many were the mishaps which, despite their skilful horsemanship, befel the pursuers. In several cases, the horses failing to clear apparently impervious thickets, lighted in the centre of them, and, becoming unmanageable, could not be extricated until their comrades were far out of sight or hearing. In more than one instance, when trying to force a bushy screen at full gallop, the horse's head came in sudden collision with a detached rock, and the animal fell dead, precipitating its rider into the tangled jungle before him. Some were struck off their steeds by coming into contact with unexpected boughs; others found their chargers, when they least expected it, struggling in an unseen morass, hidden by the thick foliage of the bushes.

At length the road, if we may so call it, became less impracticable, until the boar emerged into a wide open space. Having run some way along the wooded skirts of this area, the animal suddenly halted, and turning round, took a full survey of his enemies: they were not more than six in number besides Sir Edred. The fierce creature gnashed his tusks and seemed inclined to stand at bay, but suddenly altered his intention—if such had ever been his intention—and started off at full speed across the open plain. We may well imagine that his pursuers, once free from the underwood, did not relax in their speed as long as their horses could keep it up. Ere, however, the Northman had reached the opposite side of the open space, four of his remaining followers had been compelled to stop by the utter exhaustion of their noble steeds.

The wild boar now turned down an open glade to the right, and Sir

Edred and his two companions had not gone far in that direction ere they heard a cry for help. The boar struck up a side avenue in the direction of the cry, and then suddenly buried himself in a dark thicket. The knight, enraged at losing his game, set spurs once more to his steed, which brought him upon a scene that put the boar for the moment out of his thoughts. With his back against a tree, alone and almost unarmed, his six finest staghounds lying in the agony of death at his feet, stood King Alured, endeavouring to defend himself against the gigantic stag and his mate. There was no time to be lost, for unless succour could be instantly given, the king must fall a victim to his assailants in less than a minute. Sir Edred, however, coming up at full gallop, took the fierce and powerful animals by surprise, and ere either of them could turn, either to fight or fly, he clove with his sword the buck's head to the jaw, and severed with one blow the doe's head from her body.

"My noble preserver!" cried the king, "how shall I ever repay you for the service which you have rendered me?"

The knight deprecated any acknowledgment; declared that it was a far nobler achievement to keep two stags at bay on foot than to slay them on horseback; and then commenced a search for the boar. The bush, or rather spreading tree, under which it had taken refuge, was a Zornbaum, and just as the knight had noticed the fact, the animal, bursting from his concealment, set off once more with unabated speed in a transverse direction.

Sir Edred, leaving the king in charge of his two comrades, who were nothing loth to stay behind with so good an excuse, pursued the boar unremittingly for more than an hour longer. The animal seemed tired of breaking his way through thickets, and kept on in a long, straight alley, the trees on each side of which closed sufficiently high in the air not to incommode his pursuer. At length, as the natural lane along which they were advancing led up a gentle acclivity, a confused sound of shouting, bellowing, and yelling burst upon them. The boar turned, and eyed his pursuer with a strange glare of contemptuous, but fierce hatred. He did not, however, stay to receive his pertinacious adversary, but, turning, once more ascended the hill, and was in a few moments out of sight. As Sir Edred mounted the ascent, the sounds already described rose louder and louder; but he was at a loss to discover their origin till he reached a spot which commanded the prospect on the other side. Reining up his horse for a moment, he beheld a strange scene. In the valley below were some thirty or forty knights mounted on jaded steeds, which they in vain attempted to urge up a steep ascent. They were headed by Sir Eustace, who used every exertion, but unsuccessfully, to lead them forward. Opposed to them stood a large herd of uri, amongst which the hero of the morning's duel had taken refuge. Whilst Edred looked, the uri, emboldened by the hesitation of their antagonists, rushed down the declivity, driving the cavaliers before them. The wild boar, which had paused to breathe on the brow of the hill, now darted forward, followed by Sir Edred, who, setting spurs to his steed once more, and shouting at the full pitch of his voice, "The Dragon! the Dragon! the Red Dragon of Drontheim!" burst like a mountain torrent into the confused mass below. The effect was as strange as sudden; the uri trembled in every limb; their manes rose, and uttering cries of intense fear, they fled with the utmost precipitation; all, save their leader, who, making a rush at the

Northern knight, was received on his spear, and fell lifeless to the earth.

"Where is the boar—where is the boar?" cried the victor, heedless of the thanks and praises which were showered upon him on every side. But no one had seen it save Arnold of the Brocken, whose fame in woodcraft was only inferior to his minstrelsy. And as Sir Edred again demanded, "Where is the boar? where—where?" a deep voice answered, "WHERE?" and a chill, damp, grave-gust blew upon his cheek.

"What was that sound?" cried the minstrel. But none else had heard it, *save one;* and *he* made no reply.

The scattered parties now gradually united; the slain animals were carried home in triumph; the returning procession was announced by a triumphant hunting chorus, and received with a flourish of trumpets; and the princess welcomed with gratitude, and crowned with enthusiasm, the preserver of her father, and the victor of the day.

And the banquet commenced with renewed splendour. Sir Edred sat by Alethè's side; her bright eyes beamed kindly upon him, and her sweet voice showered its thanks upon him. King and noble, knight and minstrel, matron and maiden, vied in their endeavours to do him honour. And he did, indeed, look as if he fully deserved all the goods that fortune had bestowed: and that voice which was said to be equally invincible on the battle-field or in the bower—that voice which made men tremble with fear and ladies with love—that voice which had rallied the Northmen, only a thousand strong, when at the sack of Ascalon they had been surprised by a force of Arab lancers, ten times their numbers, had rallied them and won the day—that voice which, in the court of Constantinople, whither he had gone to arrange the ransom of prisoners taken in piracy, had won the hearts of those who were proof against the attractions of the most irresistible—that voice was exerted in all its wondrous power to charm the ear and chain the heart of the Princess Alethè. And who could listen to that voice, and not own its power? Who could look upon that brow and eye, and not feel that they belonged to one whom Nature had intended to bear sway over his fellow-men?

And now the time came for the minstrels to commence their melody; and Alethè, in honour of the Northern knight, selected the Northern harper. With flashing eyes and dishevelled hair, Folko of Dornfeld sprang forward, and drawing his hand rapidly over the chords for a few seconds, sang—to a wild and harsh strain, in which vigour and ferocity were the predominant characteristics—

THE NORTHMAN'S LYRE.

Storm and battle! Blood and fire!
These best suit the Northman's lyre:
These the Northman's heart inspire;
These the North's bright maids admire.

When the Northman seeks a bride,
Veils he not his manly pride;
Waits not he for time or tide;
Works his will, wrecks nought beside.

Soon the sword is girt I ween;
Soon the glittering blade is seen;
Soon, however proud her mien,
Yields she; weds she; dries her e'en.

Lovely princess! well for thee
Far, far distant rolls the sea;
Or a Northman, bold and free,
Would full soon thy bridegroom be.

Though thy castle were of rock,
Held by Thor and Zernebock,
Heaven and hell our race would mock
Those unrivalled charms to lock.

The minstrel having concluded this song, which he held to be as far superior to all that had preceded it, or that would or could follow, as one of his own savage warriors to any less barbarous hero, looked round with a glance of fierce triumph upon the assembly. Instead, however, of the applause which had attended his rivals, he heard only deep and indignant murmurs. And Sir Edred, much annoyed at the disagreeable impression thus given of his countrymen, said to the princess—in a tone loud enough to be heard by all those near him—"I trust that you do not believe in the character which yon base-born son of a Tartar witch has given of my countrymen? Since our ears have, however, been pained by hearing these harsh strains, would your highness deign to favour us with your society for a short time longer, and, after the wine-cup has again gone round, select a gentler minstrel?"

All applauded this proposal, and the princess, at her father's desire, acceding to Edred's wish, summoned Orlando of Provence. The graceful troubadour stepped forward, and, receiving the goblet from Alethè's hand, and draining it to the bottom, thus began:—

Oh! bright are the days where the sun of Provence
Ever shines on the loveliest region of France;
And green is the earth which the troubadours tread,
And glorious the azure that beams overhead.
And if through the heaven a cloud wings its flight,
It gleams like an angel in raiment of light;
And soft are the waves of the blue midland sea
That washes the shores of my own dear countree.

And lovely the nights when the angels unfold
From the watch-towers of heaven their banners of gold;
When the moon in her splendour unsullied looks down,
In her eye not a tear, on her brow not a frown,
When the breeze 'midst the rosebuds scarce ventures a sigh,
And the maiden's heart beats, for her lover is nigh,
And the flowers of the field, and the leaves of the grove,
And the whole rapt creation breathes nothing but love.

But oh! were I placed by the gloomy North Pole,
Where the suns never shine, and the waves never roll;
Where the birds never sing, and the flowers never bloom,
And Nature, ice-fetter'd, is one whited tomb,
And the minstrels themselves, from long neighbourhood, share
The eye of the wolf and the heart of the bear,—
I could think of Provence without ever a sigh,
Were the Princess Alethè, the matchless one, nigh!

For the calm of that brow is more soft than our skies;
And the stars are not bright as the light of those eyes;
And the smile of those lips is more gladdening by far
Than the moon on her throne, or the sun in his car.
Then weep for Orlando, ye bards of Almaine,
For the troubadour destin'd to lingering pain:—
Since who that has ever been bless'd by such light,
But must feel in THY absence the noon dark as night!

This song was hailed with loud acclamations by the whole assembly; for, though somewhat prejudiced against the Roman, as they called him, and not altogether approving the colouring of his verse or the flow of his music, both of which they considered decidedly effeminate, the brutality of Folko had rendered them less impatient of the Provençal's sweetness; the sly cut at his unfortunate rival had extremely delighted them, and the intense admiration expressed for their princess entirely made up for all minor blemishes.

Alethè now retired for the night; and Sir Eustace, availing himself of the opportunity, came up to his rival, and again thanked him frankly and warmly for his service of the morning.

"Indeed," said he, "we all owe our lives to you."

"And the boar," uttered the deep voice.

Edred had now, however, become somewhat accustomed to its accents, and began to care little for them. He determined, therefore, to improve the present occasion to his own purposes; and, accordingly, ingratiated himself with Eustace, who, being of an open and generous disposition, entertained no suspicion of his rival's having any evil designs. Indeed, considering his youth, and the high character of all those with whom he had hitherto associated, suspicion would have ill become him. For suspicion arises either from the experience or the consciousness of wrong.

"You have heard," said the elder of the two, "what strange chance brought me so opportunely to your rescue; I was in chase of a wild boar. May I ask you to allow me to-morrow to pursue the track from the point where I lost him, and to choose for yourself some other direction. You will pardon my anxiety on the subject, I know; it is natural that I should not like to be baulked of my prize. Should, however, either your party or that of the king fall in with him, I wish you all success."

Eustace assented at once, and expressed a wish to take the most easterly course, that he might become better acquainted with the paths in the direction of Schreckenstein. The king readily accorded the requests of the two young men, and decided himself on taking a more westerly route than any which had yet been chosen, that he might explore a tract of country hitherto undisturbed, and which, it was confidently asserted, abounded with game of every description.

And now the wine-flask and the ale-cup passed jovially round, and Sir Edred exerted his powers of pleasing to the uttermost; till every one agreed that the banquet suited him as well as the battle-field or the chase. The time passed on, indeed, so pleasantly, that they cheated the night of a full hour. At length the king rose, and the guests separated —Edred to contrive evil; Eustace to sleep deeply and calmly.

"He has fallen into the snare," muttered the Knight of Drontheim; "ere noon to-morrow he will be in the power of one who never yet showed mercy; everything goes as I would wish it,—my rival destroyed, —my popularity established,—Alured's life saved,—and his daughter, from filial piety, to say nothing else, ready to give her hand to him who rescued her father."

And, after a few more such meditations, he also fell asleep, to dream of the last day's exploits and the next day's expectations.

LIFE OF THE EDITOR OF A MANCHESTER NEWSPAPER.*

Dr. Whitaker, the learned but little enlightened historian of Manchester, has left us a picture of the domestic manners of the Mancunians, in which he represents a British maiden so constantly employing, in the gentle labours of the distaff, the many hours of leisure which the want of literary amusements must have left particularly vacant to the sex in all ages, that the spindle became the symbol of the sex. There is as great a difference between this picture and that given by one of the leaders of the so-called "Manchester school" of the present day, when, armed with a two-pronged weapon of flattery and corruption, he holds forth one broad sheet of the *Times* as more instructive than all the volumes of Thucydides, as there is between Dr. Whitaker's History and Mr. Archibald Prentice's "Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester."

There is little doubt, as Dr. Whitaker would tell us, that there was a Man-cenion before there was a Man-cunium, a British stronghold in the wood before a Roman fortress; that the woods were cleared away before the town was built; that the chief of Manchester was an hereditary member of the British parliament, when parliament was an assembly of chieftains; that potteries preceded foundries, and distaffs the spinning-jenny; and that episcopacy, naturally settling at first in the capitals of the provinces, was not long in finding its way from the city of the Eboracensi to that of the Mancusians. But how long an interval of human progress lies between these dark epochs where Dr. Whitaker leaves *his* Manchester, and the first springing up of a constitutional society upon the dregs of the French republic, chronicled by Mr. Archibald Prentice as the opening of *his* historical era?—all the interval that makes the difference between a gradually-increasing population and a slowly-increasing civilisation, and a great and rapid—almost dangerous—impetus given to both by an unexampled skill and success in the arts of manufacture.

To trace the progress of the so-called "constitutional principle," but in reality spirit of agitation; of reform, of amelioration sometimes, but still more frequently of class and factious gain, as in the instance of cheap bread to the manufacturing, to the eminent distress of the agricultural population; to the Corporation and Test Acts, the dissenting ministers' bill, orders in council, or any other order or enactment of the central authorities, as Mr. Archibald Prentice labours to do, is simply to ignore the great fact, that it is the nature of every man, not favoured with the good things of this world, to grumble, to agitate, to seek for vain and illusory ameliorations; and that when, as must inevitably be the case in great manufacturing districts, there is an overgrown population of hard-toiling, dissatisfied persons, the principle of movement and agitation must be expected to be more active, more incessant, and more clamorous than elsewhere.

In the present day, more than at any time, amid many inconsistencies

* Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester, intended to illustrate the Progress of Public Opinion from 1792 to 1832. By Archibald Prentice. C. Gilpin.

and absurdities, often forced upon them by the pressure from without, which is inherent in such a state of society,* still the small body of earnest, intelligent, and reflecting politicians who lead the Manchester school, and to whom we are mainly indebted for the yet imperfectly tried reforms of the commercial policy of the nation, exercise immense influence on the conduct and measures of government; and as they will, no doubt, never cease to toil in modifying the principles of taxation, so that industry shall not be oppressed, we have still to look forward to their exertions to even more important modifications in the internal administration of affairs, and to the removal of abuses prejudicial to the well-being of society and the progress of civilisation, but always with a view more particularly to the benefit of manufacturing interests.

Mr. Bright, referring the other evening to the principles of the "Manchester school," said that these principles were now adopted by many, who, previously to the success of the Corn-law agitation, and to the fulfilment of their predictions in matters of commercial policy, had believed them to be a most dangerous class of politicians—almost a treasonable set of men. Referring on this topic to Mr. Prentice's work, the honourable member said:

"Reading over the first few chapters of this book, we find that people who live now in Manchester are not at all of the same race as those who lived here in 1810. What was the Manchester Exchange then on a market day? It was not an assembly of rational beings, like the great majority of those who now assemble there; but the concourse was composed of a number of men who held principles of church ascendancy of a most furious and bigoted character. They were actuated by a sentiment of the most brutal and cruel nature, which they called loyalty. They were in favour of war to a degree which you would not expect to find among any tribe of savages; and it is more akin to the character of the jungle tiger than to that of an Englishman; and in their political partisanship they were so ferocious, that excellent, worthy, and intelligent men, who held opinions in favour of reform of any kind whatsoever, were, many of them, forced to leave the town, settling in other towns where political feeling did not run so high. And some men who have lived since to distinguish themselves above most men among whom they have lived, left this district and settled in the United States of America. From 1790 to 1820 may be considered the dark age of modern times. It was positively a reign of terror in Manchester; to be a dissenter was to be only some verminous animal, upon which high churchmen and the loyal and patriotic men who shouted

Britons never shall be slaves,

thought they might trample with impunity. To speak in favour of

* We are not going to venture into the troublous sea of politics, but we cannot help remarking that one of these absurdities of the Manchester school is, to propound that the aggressions of the Roman Catholics should be "let alone," because the Church of England is just as obnoxious to the "free inquirer." No one would for a moment venture to assert that the Romanists are not more given to ascendancy over intellect and conscience than the Protestants; and to protect and foster the one, merely because the other is disliked by the English dissenters, is like filling your garden with hedgehogs because you are inconvenienced by the rapacity of slugs.

reform of any kind, was to be prosecuted; and church-and-king mobs assembled with impunity, broke the windows of a liberal newspaper office, pelted the editor, demolished his property; and I think about 180 or 190 publicans in Manchester signed a solemn declaration that they would not have any of those pestilent reformers of any kind whatever in their tap-rooms or bar-parlours, and that they would not even sell them anything to drink, or give them any kind of entertainment whatsoever."

Mr. Bright is certainly corroborated to a certain extent in his highly-coloured picture of the rude state of society in Manchester, at the commencement of the present century, by Mr. Prentice's narrative. But the formation of a "Church-and-King Club," the members of which wore uniforms, and whose standing toast, as long as they could stand, in their clubs and convivial meetings, was "Church and King, and down with the Rump," was met by a "Manchester Constitutional Society," of which Lloyd, Walker, Cooper, Sir George Philips, and T. Kershaw, were members; and *Wheeler's Chronicle* and *Harrop's Mercury* were soon opposed by the *Manchester Herald*, which, says Mr. Prentice, "continued spiritedly to advocate liberal principles, till judge-made law and mob lawlessness put it down, in March, 1793." Trees, not of liberty, but of loyalty, were borne about triumphantly; and inscriptions decorated the taverns, announcing that no Jacobins were admitted there. "They valued," says Mr. Prentice, "the custom of the jovial church-and-king men more than that of men who met to talk rather than to drink!"

There were one hundred and eighty-six places of public concourse, into any one of which had a reformer or a friend of peace intruded himself, he would have been regarded as belonging to "a well-known set of daring miscreants," whom grossly to insult or assault would only be a proof of loyalty, religion, and manhood. There were then no neutral news-rooms, no Royal or Mechanics' Institutions, no Lyceums, no Athenæums. Even in the assemblies for music and dancing the "Jacobin" and his wife and daughters were liable to insult and vulgar abuse. The reformers were excluded from all society but that around their own firesides, and even there they had carefully to guard against the introduction of the insidious spy; and in business transactions, none who could help it would deal with them. Throughout Lancashire the same coarse manners and intolerant spirit prevailed, though in different degrees. At Liverpool, comparatively refined Liverpool, about a dozen gentlemen, amongst whom were William Roscoe, Dr. Currie, and the Rev. William Shepherd, had been in the habit of meeting once a fortnight for literary discussion. "Even this peaceful and unoffending company," says Roscoe's biographer, "was not exempt from the violence of party feeling."

Throughout Mr. Prentice would have us believe that the bigoted party, as he calls them, were also the most thirsty; but Lancashire legends, as transmitted to us by the author of "Passages in the Life of a Radical," by Elijah Ridings, and still more recently by the humorous author of "The Ghost of Tim Bobbin,"* would have us believe that the notable poet and radical schoolmaster of Milnrow was not only, like Burns, addicted to social enjoyments during lifetime, but that his thirst was prolonged even to beyond the grave:

> I brought him op o deep breawn jug
> 'At o gallon did contain;
> An' he took it at one blessed draught,
> An' laid him deawn again.

* The Ghost of Tim Bobbin. A Tale in Rhyme, for Christmas-time. Abel Heywood, Manchester.

Mr. Wheeler has recorded, in his "History of Manchester," proofs of the "patriotism" of that city at the commencement of the war with France; but Mr. Prentice, who dwells with *gusto* only on the dark side of the picture, the disquietude produced by commercial distress, and popular discontent brought about by want and dearness, looks upon the same period with unmitigated horror, as one of "war fever" and "political insanity." "Pugnacity," as Mr. Prentice designates the spirit of self-defence and the love of the altar and the hearth, "called itself patriotism, and took its full swing, persecuting the lovers of peace as if the love of peace were a crime." The working classes, little accustomed to make sacrifices for the general welfare, which is with them an abstract idea of patriotism, naturally soon grew discontented with war expenses and war prices, and held a great meeting on the 24th of May, in St. George's Fields, for the sage purpose of fixing a minimum rate of wages; and it is to this meeting, and the prosecution of Colonel Hanson, that resulted from it, that Mr. Prentice traces the origin of that bitter feeling of employed against employers, which was manifested in 1812, 1817, 1819, and 1826, and continues, though divested of much of its virulence, to the present day. Thus it has happened that, from a most mistaken notion of the relations of the employer and the employed from the period of the war till the passing of the Reform Bill, Manchester continued to be ever the centre of wide-spread and deeply-ramified social disorganisation. Mr. Prentice says, that the working classes had been alienated from the government not less by their sufferings than by indifference to their complaints, and the harsh treatment of those who befriended them in their adversity. But the fact is, that there was a variety of causes in operation to perpetuate agitation in so favourable a field, amongst which the hydra-headed crop of "world regenerators," ever busy in a crowd, were not the least efficient.

The dissenting ministers' bill was a cause rife with vexation, but the high price of food, want, and general distress, were far more effective with the masses; a fierce and bitter spirit soon manifested itself against employers; and the riots, called Luddite, from an imaginary leader, Captain or King Ludd, disturbed, for a time, the tranquillity of most of the manufacturing districts. The Manchester Exchange riot in 1812, and the fatal conflict at Middleton, appear to have been among the most serious of these early demonstrations which led the way to the notorious meeting of the 16th of August, 1819.

The arch-enemy of the democrats, during this long and eventful period of time, was one Nadin, deputy-constable of Manchester, who arrested sometimes (as in the case of the meeting at the Prince Regent's Arms, Ancoats, on the 11th of June, 1816) thirty-eight radicals at a time, effecting these wholesale arrests with only six or eight police-officers, all of whom were, however, well armed with staves, pistols, and blunder-busses:

Nadin is thus described by Bamford:—"He was, I should suppose, about six feet one inch in height, with an uncommon breadth and solidity of frame. He was also, as well as he was strongly built, upright in gait and active in motion. His head was full sized, his complexion sallow, his hair dark and slightly grey; his features were broad and non-intellectual, his language coarse and illiterate, and his manner rude and overbearing to equals or inferiors." The radical poet, who seems, after all, to have had no dislike to this rough deputy, gives a specimen of his conversation on their way to the New Bailey Prison in Manchester:

"Passing Street Bridge and Royley, we entered the village of Royton, the streets of which were deserted and the doors shut. We soon returned to Royley, and the constables made a dash into a house in search of a man named Mellor, but he was not there. A crowd was collected near the carriage, and as I was expecting to move on, the door was suddenly opened, and a long, thin barrel of a human body was thrust into the coach, head first, a couple of stilt-like legs being doubled up after it. 'Lock 'em together,' said Mr. Nadin, and it was no sooner said than done. This person had met some of the runners in a back court or alley, and threatened to beat in their brains with a walling hammer which he had in his hand.

"George Howarth, for that was the name of my new companion, was a decent, labouring, married man, of Royton, and was about six feet four inches in height. He said he thought it a very hard case; 'he cudno' tell wot he'd dun amiss.' Mr. Nadin said he'd know 'wot he'd dun amiss' before he was much older.

"'Why, bless your life, Mesthur Nadin,' said George, 'yo're a graidley felley for owt 'at I kno' to th' contrary, an' I never sed nowt ogen yo' i' my lyve.'

"'Aye, an' I'll make thee into a graidley felley too afore I ha' dun wi' thee. Theaw'rt a moderate length to begin wi', but theaw'll be lunger afore theaw comes back to Reighton: ween ha' the hang'd,' said our keeper.

"'Nay, Mesthur Nadin,' said George, 'dunno' say so: they axt wot I had i' mi' hont, an' I shode 'em; it wur nobbut a bit ov a wallin' hommer 'at I'd bin a borroin'.'

"'Aye,' said Mr. Nadin, 'an' theaw sed theaw'd knock their brains eawt wi' it. But ween larn thee, an' aw yo' Jacobins, heaw yo' threatun to kill th' king's officers: theaw'll be hang'd as sure as theaw sits theer.' George seemed thoughtful upon this. He looked at the shackles, and at me; and soon after we drew up at the Spread Eagle public-house, in Manchester-street, Oldham."

Alas, poor Nadin! he is gone with most of his natural enemies—the early radicals of Manchester; but his name is still familiar to every dweller in that great city, and a word of terror to naughty children.

Mr. Prentice, who came from Glasgow to settle in Manchester at a much later period, although a constitutional reformer, does not extend his sympathies to the radicals of Mr. Hunt's school, who disturbed the peace in 1819. There was a levity and flippancy in their manners, and still more so in their libations, he avows, that give us, as we look back to them now, little proof that the actors had any deep feeling of the responsibility they were incurring as the advocates of great national rights; but they also, he adds, furnish an argument that these men, thus *idly* occupying themselves, were far from being dangerous revolutionists. It was during this epoch of Hunt radicalism that the *Manchester Guardian*, of which Mr. Prentice became one of the editors, assumed to itself the task of directing the opinion of reformers, hitherto represented by *Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette*.

A short period of plenty and cheapness in 1822 brought back with it also an interval of calm. The modern history of Manchester is not altogether one of continued physical, moral, and political struggles. The Literary and Philosophical Society, which dated its existence from 1781, had, throughout a period peculiarly unfavourable for intellectual pursuits, a beneficial influence on a portion of Manchester society, humanising and refining, while out of its circle there was so much of mind-degrading intolerance. In this point of view the memory of the Henrys, the Percivals, and the Daltons, will be regarded with veneration, even without reference to their services in the advancement of science. "I had the curiosity," says Mr. Prentice, "two years ago, to ascertain how many of the members of the Literary and Philosophical Society survived after a period of twenty-seven years," and the list given includes only twenty-four names, among

whom we perceive those of James Ainsworth (1805); Gilbert Winter (1810); Sir Benjamin Heywood, Bart. (1815); Robert Hyde Greg (1817); and Eaton Hodgkinson (1820). "Thus," observes Mr. Prentice, "does one race disappear and another take its place."

During the brief period of comparative prosperity of 1822 and 1823, among other schemes, one was devised for the foundation of an institution for the promotion of literature, science, and the fine arts, and a meeting to that effect was held at the Exchange, on the 1st of October, 1823, Dr. Davenport Hulme in the chair, at which the principal speakers were Mr. George William Wood, Mr. Thomas Ainsworth, Mr. Thomas Hardman, Mr. R. H. Greg, and Mr. Robert Philips. The subscriptions amounted, before the end of the year, to upwards of 14,000*l.*, and being continued into the prosperous year 1824, the Royal Institution was founded. In the latter year, the Manchester Mechanics' Institution was also founded, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. William Fairbairn, Mr. T. Hopkins, and Mr. R. Roberts, with the praiseworthy object of teaching the application of science to mechanical and manufacturing art.

The same year, considerable dissatisfaction having been expressed by some of the gentlemen who had been most instrumental in establishing the *Manchester Guardian*, that it was no longer a bold, uncompromising exponent of "political truth and progress," Mr. Archibald Prentice was induced to purchase *Cowdroy's Gazette*, which he started with a new press and a new fount of type. But this was not effected without assistance from friends; and one of the firms which had assisted Mr. Prentice having become insolvent in 1826, the new proprietor had to repay to the bank the money which had been advanced to him; and this was the beginning of difficulties which appear to have gone on in an increasing ratio. The *Manchester Gazette* passed out of Mr. Prentice's hands, and was soon afterwards incorporated with the *Manchester Times*, which was established by a joint-stock company, consisting of a number of gentlemen, several of whom, Mr. Prentice tells us, had lost money by his failure, but were still desirous of securing his public services. It is now, upon the occasion of disposing of his interest in this latter paper, after twenty-three years' labours as a journalist, that Mr. Prentice has undertaken to give "some account of the progress of liberal opinion in such a town as Manchester, and brief notices of the part, however humble, he had taken in its formation." And we can truly assure our readers that the work before us has interest far beyond the narrow limits of a local school; and it is sincerely to be hoped that the example of such long, persevering efforts to displace a stubborn obstruction to progress will prove a valuable lesson to those who may follow in the same constitutional track.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VAN DIEST was not astonished when he heard from the people of the inn that their Spanish lodger had gone forth, but he was pleased to hear that he was expected home in a couple of hours, and that his horse was yet in the stable. Instead of returning, however, to the good widow, he found in the bustle and activity of the streets something too congenial with his mind to quit them. He reflected, moreover, that he might perhaps satisfy himself more fully concerning the object of his search by casually observing his movements unperceived, than by the visit which, under some pretence or other, he meant to pay him. The Palais de la Cour was, he thought, the spot most favourable to his views, should Chievosa really prove, as he so often obscurely hinted, a man of some note.

Thither, accordingly, Van Diest bent his steps. The space within the outer stone enclosure in front of the building was filled with all sorts of people, for it was the ordinary passage, through the principal courts, to the large park and pleasure-grounds at the back of the palace, which served as walks to the public, as well as grounds for hunting and other diversions to the nobles and gentlemen.

Van Diest did not enter within the stone palisade at once, like so many around him; such a direct manner of setting about any purpose being quite foreign to his loitering habits. He preferred, on the contrary, taking his post outside, thence to survey all those who stood within. If any chance passer-by had taken the trouble to cast an eye upon Van Diest, he might have imagined, from the grave, meditative expression of his countenance, that he was gazing on the palace with a melancholy pleasure, produced, perhaps, by reminiscences of the past—of the long line and illustrious race that had there flourished or languished since the time when first the structure had been erected by a Burgundian duke. No such thoughts obtruded on the mind of our honest friend, at all times and in all places too keenly alive to the present to hazard a thought on the past. He had, it is true, bestowed a long, thoughtful gaze on the majestic windows, and tall antique front of the hall of entrance leading to the chapel, and also at the chaste, elegant architecture of the church itself; but he was counting the windows, and calculating, as near as might be, foot by foot, the inner dimensions of the building from its external appearance. This interesting contemplation did not, however, lead his mind away from his main object, and he soon became convinced that Chievosa was not among the walkers in the outer precincts of the palace. To the interior, therefore, he determined to direct his further examination.

The principal court was crowded with people; some walking about, some playing at bowls, and some gazing listlessly up at the palace windows, from which others were looking down with equal vacuity. Van Diest was attracted by the group of players at the game of which he was very fond, but still he did not fail to ascertain, even whilst watching the course of the bowls, that neither among the gaily nor the darkly clad figures there lounging, or passing through the yard, was the object of his search. A quarter of an hour passed by thus, when his attention became

forcibly attracted towards a man of unusual height, in a plain, sober garb, making towards the interior of the palace.

"Surely that's my man," thought Van Diest; and was about to follow, when suddenly one of the wooden balls, grazing slightly his foot, struck with great force a young cavalier at no great distance, one of a small knot of gentlemen who, like himself, had been watching the game.

A cry escaped the lips of his companion; for, though very much hurt in the leg, he seemed less disconcerted by the accident than those around him. The players immediately left off their amusement in great consternation, and the object of their solicitude was soon surrounded by sympathising friends. Van Diest had no difficulty in ascertaining that this person was no other than the Marquis of Berghen, who was on the eve of departure for Spain.

This event was eagerly commented upon by all present. Some said it was an ill omen for the journey of that young nobleman and the Count of Montigni, whom Margaret of Parma was sending to her brother, to represent the grievances of the country. Some applied the omen (for every trifle was an omen in those days) rather to the object of their mission than to themselves; and ventured to foretel from this slight circumstance that they would fail in their enterprise. Others, again, deplored anything likely to retard the journey from which so much was expected.

Van Diest listened to all that was said around him, and long after the marquis, who, it was rumoured, was very severely hurt, had been transported to his own lodgings, he stood gazing at the idle groups whom curiosity drew towards the place where the accident had occurred. But the person whom he was in the act of following, at the very moment when his thoughts had been thus diverted into a new channel, was at length remembered; and, muttering his favourite axiom—"Better late than never"—he directed his steps towards the more private and secluded yards of the palace.

It is doubtful if his uncalled-for presence in these precincts would not have brought upon him some severe reprimand, if not something worse, from the menials who were here hurrying to and fro in their different avocations, but for a fortunate circumstance. Scarcely had he cautiously put his foot into these, to him, perfectly unknown regions, when he was pleased and re-assured by hearing a stave of a well-known ditty carolled by a voice that seemed familiar to him. On approaching nearer to the singer he recognised in him a protégé of former days, a fellow-townsman by birth, who had obtained a subordinate situation at court—a place, namely, in the offices; for which preferment, considering it as one of the steps of a ladder whose lowest round was still profitable, he had not hesitated to abandon his native town.

After the first words of recognition, the lad inquired of Van Diest what motive had brought him to the palace, whilst the other retainers, satisfied that he was no unknown intruder, passed him by without further notice. When the young man was informed that the worthy burgher was in search of some one whom he expected and wished to meet, he immediately offered to assist him in his search; but whilst proffering his services, some one called him hastily away.

"You see I can do nothing now," he said; "but if you are willing to

wait for me, step under yon small porch; there is a passage beyond, in which you can very well remain till I return; there is no chance of any one disturbing you there. By-the-by, now I think better of it, I may as well take the same road myself—it is as good as another—I don't know why it is so seldom used."

As he spoke he led the way through a low stone vaulted entrance into a passage that ended at the foot of a narrow winding staircase, up which he disappeared.

This part of the building, even at that time rapidly falling into neglect and disrepair, seemed to date from a very early period. It probably had formed part of the original structure erected by John, the second Duke of Brabant, in 1300. Whatever purposes it had served in those remote days, it had of late years become a disregarded back issue from the palace, leading into the yards and outer offices, and was used but rarely, even by the domestics themselves. The passage within was irregular, with here and there projections in the walls, and no less unaccountable recesses. Without pondering long upon the probable reasons for this architectural caprice, Van Diest ensconced himself in one of the cavities, and leaning against the damp wall, waited patiently for the return of his friend, from whom he expected to derive some valuable information concerning Chievosa, if, indeed, as he began to suspect, that individual was in the habit of frequenting the palace. He had pondered some time upon this subject, and almost arrived at a conclusion, when his attentive ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps from within. The next instant the man in the dark cloak who had previously attracted his notice advanced with a quick step along the passage. He was so absorbed in thought, that he looked neither to the right nor left; thus Van Diest escaped detection, and had a fair opportunity of convincing himself of his identity.

"It is passing strange!" thought the honest burgher; but his friend, who followed close upon the stranger's heels, prevented his further reflections.

"Who is that man, and what does he here?" he inquired of the court menial.

"Hush—hush!" replied the young man, putting a finger on his lips. "Never make such questions here, my good sir; it were not a light or a safe matter to answer them. Let us leave this passage speedily."

"But for old acquaintance sake," persisted Van Diest.

"No, not for gold," responded the man, sharply; and Van Diest had the good sense to feel that this was conclusive.

"Don't be angry," continued this most subordinate of court retainers, who was so well versed in court duties. "But, *à la guerre comme à la guerre, et au palais comme au palais.* Besides, I really know little or nothing of the person you inquire after."

Van Diest now saw there was nothing more to be done, and that his best plan was to retire in order to ascertain if Chievosa had returned to his lodgings. But he was greatly surprised, on entering the square in front of the palace, to perceive him walking along at no great distance. He could only account for this circumstance by supposing that some chance meeting had detained him; for his rapid, elastic step must otherwise, he imagined, have taken him far out of sight. Van Diest, keeping at such a distance as might not expose him to the Spaniard's observation,

and yet would enable him to watch his every movement, followed cautiously. He had not far to go; for no sooner did they come in front of the Palace of Orange, than his unconscious guide disappeared under the gateway.

Within these precincts Van Diest, carelessly obtrusive as he naturally was, dared not to follow; and it was with no small astonishment that he beheld Chievosa passing unquestioned through the numerous menials lounging under the portico. The young Spaniard did not even deign to notice the respectful obeisance of some, nor did he seem to heed the looks of curiosity cast on him by others, but proceeded with a firm step towards the main building within the court, as one perfectly familiar with the place and the objects around him.

Van Diest grew every instant more perplexed. He knew not what to think; but he was decided to observe the next movements of Chievosa, for his curiosity was more powerfully excited at this crisis than it had ever been before in his own remembrance. He stationed himself close to the stone sockets in which lighted torches were planted of a night before the dwellings of the great, where he determined to remain until the mysterious Spaniard should reappear.

Here he had so long to wait, that the patience of any other man would have been totally exhausted. Not so that of the persevering Van Diest. Prolonged as was his stay at the Palace of Orange, when Chievosa left it, and with hasty strides made towards his own lodgings, his indefatigable follower resumed his course with unabated zeal. But this time a trifling occurrence arrested Van Diest's further progress. Greatly as it annoyed him, he could not avoid the friendly greetings of some of his favourite cronies, who had espied him in the distance, and now pouncing upon him, detained him perforce among them. Strive as he would, without being guilty of absolute rudeness, he could not shake them off. Laughing and gossiping, they forced him to accompany them to the next best place of public entertainment; and, oh! human weakness, considerably more than an hour had expired before Van Diest found himself at the door of Chievosa's hostelry.

The good cheer of which he had partaken had just enlivened our friend sufficiently to make him waggish. It was, therefore, with a considerably more knowing look than he would, perhaps, have voluntarily assumed on this occasion, that he demanded of the master of the inn if a certain Diego Maya, a Spaniard that was or ought to be, was at that moment in his house. The landlord had already seen Van Diest once that morning, and seemed perfectly to recollect him; he demanded, however, in a somewhat forbidding manner, "And who may you be who ask, my worthy master?"

Van Diest hesitated a moment, and turned over in his own mind the propriety of giving his real name. Suddenly a thought suggested itself. The person he sought had chosen to sail under false colours; there was no reason, then, why he should approach him under true ones. He did not see by what right Chievosa had adopted the name he had assumed; he determined, therefore, to take the same, and replied gravely,

"Call me, for the present, Diego Maya, if you please, and announce me as such to my cognomen."

"That's strange!" exclaimed the host, with a broad grin. "You are the fifth of the name I have introduced to-day. Well, never mind; I

have received my directions, and must abide by them—please follow me, my master."

He led the way up a narrow oaken staircase, darkened by time, and through several passages, to what seemed to be his most remote and isolated apartments. Here he paused; and, opening a door, ushered Van Diest into a large dark chamber, and begged him to wait patiently until such time as the person he wished to see should be disengaged; for, he added, he was at that moment closeted with another Diego Maya, and had given the strictest orders that he should on no account be disturbed. "They have already been some time together; it won't last much longer; so take patience, my good master." And, with these consoling words, the host left the room.

There was absolutely no trace of furniture in this desolate apartment, unless we mention the never-failing oaken bench, which in those days adhered to the wall as uniformly as did the oaken rafters to the ceiling. The high shutters were closed, and the light came in sparingly through the small glass windows above them. The room felt close; there was something so unprepossessing about the place, that Van Diest's exuberant spirits were damped by the peculiar impression it produced upon his senses. Fear is a great moraliser; and it was, perhaps, under the influence of this feeling that he began to question the propriety of his own conduct in thus obtruding himself upon the privacy of another. He reflected, that although the motive might be good, the action itself was unjustifiable; and he came to the conclusion that, upon the whole, it were better to steal noiselessly from the apartment, and make a precipitate and, if possible, timely retreat.

Scarcely had he risen to put into practice this resolution, when an indistinct sound of voices proceeding from the inner chamber again roused his innate curiosity. This was too great a temptation to be resisted. He stepped cautiously to the oaken door which separated him from the speakers, and lowered his head until his ear came nearly in contact with the latch. The sounds were at first confused; but as the voices of the interlocutors rose, they became distinctly audible. As Van Diest eagerly drank in the sense of their words he became suddenly very pale, and turned to leave the chamber. He had not, however, with a noiseless tread reached the middle of the room, ere the door which he had just left flew open, and Chievosa stood before him.

On perceiving Van Diest, surprise rooted him to the spot, and kept him mute; but the next instant, one of those fitful gusts of passion, which at times came over him with the suddenness and violence of the hurricane, seemed to restore with tenfold energy the faculties which astonishment had for a moment paralysed.

"You here, sir!" he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder—"you here, and at whose request?—at whose bidding, pray? But I know it well; why should I stoop to ask? It is your vile curiosity—the disease of your imbecile mind that has made you dog my steps, listen behind my door, and surprise my secrets!" The threatening sternness of his look, and the startling vehemence of his tones, increased with every word he spoke. "All this you have done, sir, to gratify one of the paltry cravings of your silly nature; but you have not done it with impunity!"

With these words Chievosa darted forward with the bound of an angry tiger, and the next instant his long thin hand seized the arm of Van

Diest, and held it with a grasp of iron. The pressure must have been very painful; but Van Diest felt it not. The countenance of the Spaniard was so fierce, and his eye had so doubtful, so terrifying an expression within its rays, that Van Diest's senses grew confused with fear as he gazed on him. He next expected to feel a cold poniard gliding through his ribs.

"Speak, man, speak!" vociferated the Spaniard, in tones that passion rendered almost inarticulate, whilst he shook Van Diest violently. "How came you here? What have you heard? How came you by my password? Speak, will you!"

"Mein Gott! mein Gott! For the Virgin's sake, let me go—release your hold, I entreat," exclaimed Van Diest at length, in no very assured accents. "I have done nothing to deserve to be treated thus—indeed I have not."

"How came you here?" repeated Chievosa, still retaining his grasp.

"Very simply; I see no cause for offence in it," pleaded Van Diest, gradually recovering the shock. "I happen to have business in Brussels—arrive here—see you in the street—the street is open to all—you are too abstracted to notice me—I wish to talk to you—follow you as quickly as I can—see you enter this house—am prevented by a chance meeting from entering it with you. I come at last thinking to meet a friend—am not a minute in your room, indeed scarcely know where I am, before you—you——"

As Van Diest proceeded in his Jesuitical narrative, he became more composed, and absolutely resumed something of his usual assurance, when at these last words he felt the Spaniard's hold relax.

"If that were true! But it is a lie—a hellish lie!" continued Chievosa, with a brow still contracted, and a flashing eye. "But I'll soon know the truth—on your life stir not."

With these words he turned to the door and opened it. His look of menace was sufficient to keep Van Diest quiet, even had he entertained the idea of escaping at such a moment.

Chievosa from the landing-place shouted desperately for the host; he might not have been heard, in spite of his stentorian powers—so far out of the way were the apartments he had chosen—had not the landlord been purposely watching his opportunity to introduce Van Diest according to his promise.

"Host! Villain! Beer-besotten fool! Come hither instantly!" cried the impatient Spaniard, the instant he caught sight of the man, in loud and angry tones, which, though they sounded in Van Diest's relieved ears like the dying moan of the surges after the raging of the tempest, seemed to terrify the host exceedingly.

"Tell me, and at once, without subterfuge, how long has this man been here?"

Now, whether prompted by a natural instinct, or by the sagacity acquired by long practice of dealing with all sorts of men and characters, or whether he understood the meaning, pleading look of Van Diest, the host, on whose answer the latter hung as though it had been a sentence of life or death, answered unhesitatingly:

"Not a minute, fair sir, I can assure you by my patron saint!"

"Art certain knave?" said Chievosa, eyeing him closely; but Flemish stolidity for once put to shame Spanish cunning; and to all questions,

however framed, the host returned the same answer: namely, that Van Diest was but that instant arrived.

"Well, since it is so, saddle my horse as speedily as possible; I must be off instantly," said Chievosa, imperatively; and the landlord, glad to escape so cheaply, hurried away with all possible celerity. But knowing a countryman of his—for he had no trouble in recognising Van Diest as such at first glance, in spite of his assumed name—to be in the hands of an angry Spaniard, he posted several of his men at the bottom of the stairs, with instructions how to act in case of need. Instances of violence were common enough in those times to justify such precautionary measures.

When, however, Chievosa re-entered the room, all trace of anger had vanished from his fine countenance. The change was so sudden that it was as if a magician's wand had smoothed down every frown.

"Forgive me," said he, coming up frankly to Van Diest, and offering his hand. "Forgive my childish petulance, Master van Diest, but you may perceive by the precautions I take to escape observation how important concealment is to me at present. I assure you," he continued, in the soft bland tones that were more usual with, it can scarcely be said more natural to him, than those in which he had so lately indulged—"I assure you the mysteries in which I am involved are no child's play. They not only concern my own safety and happiness, but those of persons who are dearer to you than I can flatter myself to be. This must excuse my irritation—my mad vehemence at finding myself, as I thought, by an awkward chance, put in a wrong light in your eyes. I might solicit your silence concerning this interview in a certain quarter; for it would be most unhappy for all parties were you to raise there any suspicions of the honesty of my views: but on reflection I will not—I will rather leave it to your own good sense to consider if you will communicate to others, or not, the unfavourable impressions you must have formed upon misleading appearances which I have it not in my power at present to explain away, as I easily could if I were but free to do so. Come, Master van Diest, forgive me, and let us take a glass of wine together in sign of renewed amity."

"I forgive you," said Van Diest, "although my reception was not much to my fancy. My arm still aches with the gripe you gave me. You come off cheap with a quiet man like me, Master Chievosa; had it been Paul van Meeren you had handled so roughly you might have fared worse."

"Wash down your discontent, man, with a glass of Rhenish—I know it is what you like best—and bear no resentment."

"I bear no man malice; but I'll take none of your wine, thank you," said the burgher, coolly.

As Chievosa turned to depart, Van Diest suddenly took the resolution of a man. He strode up to the Spaniard, and in his turn seized the arm of the young man, which felt slight, but firm as a bent bow beneath his fingers.

"Hark'ee, Master Chievosa," said he, "I know not what your pretended mysteries may be—what your secret views, or your real character. But this much will I tell you—harm not a hair of Margaret van Meeren's head—wrong her in nothing. She is the child of my friend, and in some sort mine, for she is my goddaughter. Harm her not, I say; or weak, powerless, as I may seem to you, depend upon it, I will make you pay

for it dearly. Do not forget that my eye is upon you and her. Injure my godchild in the smallest matter, and the world will not be large enough to contain you and me."

"So-o!" exclaimed Chievosa, with a look of amazement. "Look you there, my master—what next? Well, I will tell you a secret in turn, and that is, I laugh to scorn your idle menaces. And hark you!" he continued, with some touch of his former violence, "one warning deserves another." And turning full upon Van Diest, he confronted him eye to eye, foot to foot. "When next you choose to dog my steps, attempt to learn what it is my pleasure to conceal, and stand in my path, beware—fool, beware! Put not your finger on the edge of a knife lest it cut you. Master van Diest cross me not again as you have this day done. You are fairly warned—*beware!*"

With these words he left the chamber, and before Van Diest had well collected himself, he heard the hoofs of the Spaniard's horse ringing against the pavement as he galloped out from the inn yard.

Van Diest looked somewhat crestfallen when he arrived at the house of widow Van Raden, and though he by no means refused to partake of the good things she had so abundantly provided, and seemed even cheered by the incessant and lively chat of his kind hostess, still it was evident his usual placidity of mood was ruffled. He heard that a house was on sale, and forgot to ask the names of either buyer or seller. A new miracle had happened, 'twas said, at a convent of nuns at Madrid, and a new saint was about to be added to the calendar, still he maintained the same unusual passiveness.

"Matters have gone wrong with the poor man this morning," mused the widow. But the good woman's surmises were not to meet with any solution that day.

After their early meal was over, Van Diest took a kind and friendly leave of his hostess. Not all her entreaties could prevail on him to stay. Pressing business, he said, recalled him immediately to Antwerp. What the business of so confirmed an idler and gossip could be was a torturing conjecture; so much so that honest widow Van Raden forgot the pains of the gout in this new mental suffering, a happy state of oblivion that lasted long after her visitor had left not only her house, but Brussels itself.

A great change had, indeed, come over the spirit of his mood as worthy Master van Diest plodded his way back the same road he had so recently traversed. His careless lounging air had given way to a posture more rigid, and his habitual simper had settled into a grave expression that sat upon his features as melancholy might on those of another. There were besides many other little symptoms of uneasiness about him. Not only did he suffer the most amiable chatty-looking personages to ride by unaccosted, unheeded, but actually avoided many acquaintances whose advances at any other time he would have been eager to meet. Cornelia herself was disagreeably surprised, and not a little puzzled, when her voluntary pauses at her master's accustomed halts on the road-side were not gratefully acknowledged; and showed some symptoms of discontent when her numerous attempts to crop the fresh inviting grass by the way were gently, though firmly, checked by her usually indulgent master. He did not, it is true, urge his favourite to a speed that might have been inconvenient both to master and beast; but he moved forward at a steady trot, and slackened not his pace; in short, so far as his nature permitted, Van Diest was hurrying back to Antwerp.

Chapter XXV.

Not far from that of the Van Meerens' stood the house of a lute-maker, with whom Cornelius and his friend Van Diest had lived on terms of great intimacy. Now exchanging, now buying instruments, examining every one that left his hands, trying each and all by turns in the dark small room where, behind his counter, the indefatigable master was ever at work, they had there loitered away many a golden hour. The interest with which they watched the progress of a new piece was gratifying to the good lute-maker, and he frequently consulted them as to the exact turn of the necks of his violins and viol-di-gambas, on which the beauty of these instruments much depends—the quaint carving of the heads, and on the more or less wood to be cut away from the bellies for the sake of sonority: he would not, indeed, have ventured to deliver, or put up any one for sale, until they had passed sentence upon it.

Master Breulen had, besides the attractions of his art, a fine bass voice, which was often put into requisition of an evening, when the friends were willing to support ably the brilliant voices of Margaret and the young Spaniard. The violin-maker was, moreover, no less fond of playing than of making instruments, and he was considered a performer of no mean order on the viol-di-gamba—for the melodious violoncello had not yet made its entry into the musical world. Van Diest played very respectably the violin—perfect, his want of application had never permitted him to become; Lopez Chievosa performed exquisitely on the mandolin; and Cornelius was no contemptible hand at the virginals. These formed the basis of a small private orchestra, whose merits were not unknown in a town where every one was more or less musical.

What pleasant times had those been for Cornelius, when his home was made gay with sweet harmonies, and his child's rich soft tones blended with his supporting chords—how innocent, how delightful the relaxation! It was through that small aperture—the taste of the honest Fleming bordering upon passion—that the young Spaniard had first crept into, and afterwards maintained himself in, Cornelius's favour. Of business he, in truth, understood but little; but he was a perfect master of melody, and that was the surest road to the good burgher's heart.

But times were changed; and as Cornelius van Meeren sat by the open casement gazing on the instrument-shop over the way his heart grew sad. The place was now tenanted by a stranger—a soulless trafficker who sold carelessly what he neither valued nor used. The former possessor, the quietest of human beings, had been, on slight suspicion of heresy, dragged from his peaceful home; his instruments, the beloved companions of his long and harmless life, together with his house, confiscated for the benefit of his judges. Other property he possessed none: so finding an impossibility of producing proofs strong enough to condemn him, and having no sufficient motive for forging any, they had left him at length at liberty, but a beggar. Paul and Cornelius had secretly helped him to reach England; but what became of him there they were unable to discover.

The departure of this friend broke another link of Cornelius's existence; for habit is even a stronger tie than affection, and an accustomed pleasure, to an unimpassioned, methodical disposition, the greatest of

any. Besides the natural grief he felt for the loss of his friend, he was much moved to think how so inoffensive a being could have come under the observation of the authorities. These were sad things for him to ponder upon.

As he gazed mournfully on the lutes and fiddles suspended by long protruding poles from above the shop-window, whose manufacturing he had himself superintended with absorbing interest, tears came fast into his eyes and soon overflowed them; he brushed them repeatedly away with the back of his hand, but still they would not be checked.

His wife sat spinning, or pretending to spin, but evidently absorbed in thought; whilst Margaret glided noiselessly towards her father, and now stood looking in his face with tender earnestness. He, at length, perceived her, and said pettishly, as if annoyed that she should have observed his weakness,

"Surely! that's the worst of it; now-a-days, girls are grown idler than they used to be; a man can't call his thoughts his own, if he is to be spied by his own children."

"Why not make your thoughts lighter, dear father, by communicating them to those who are bound to listen to them with respect and sympathy," said Margaret, speaking more freely than usual, for she already began to feel the power that a superior strength of character gives in all the relative situations of life.

"How do I know if you would sympathise with me?" said Cornelius, in the same discontented tone. "You are scarcely out of the egg-shell, and you already take upon yourself to judge and act independently of your parents in matters that involve their own happiness, and, for aught I know, their safety too. What care you for my friends?—they are not yours. What if one is an exile on foreign shores—perhaps interred in a foreign grave, for I am sure poor Giles will not have survived the shock to be thus sent away from all that he knew and prized in this world! His old, dark, uncomfortable house was a palace to him. Nothing on earth would have made him part from it. Poor Giles! but you care not for him, nor for Cornelius Grappheus, whose trial lasts so long, and who now sits lonely over his bread and water in a prison, instead of dining with us—you mind not these; your heart is all with Paul and his friends. You share not my wishes, how should you share my regrets?"

"Father, you do me great injustice," said Margaret. "God knows I pity all who are unhappy, even those I do not know; how should I not feel for those I have known from childhood upwards? I am not so heartless as you say, father, though, I confess, what I regret more even than the absence of our friends, is the disunion that, in many instances, has caused it."

"Nay, it is prudence that forbids our intercourse, not want of affection."

"Alas that such prudence should be needful!" said Margaret. "It has made our once gay home dull and dreary."

"But that will not, cannot last," said Cornelius, who, in spite of himself, was gradually won away from his painful reverie; "for all my brother may say to the contrary, if we but manage to keep snug during foul weather the sun must shine at last."

"But uncle Paul, father, will never again make one of us."

The father remained silent.

"And good Master Kay, whom you are afraid to see because he has not deserted your brother!"

"Master Kay will shortly come to trouble without doing my brother great good, I wot. We Catholics must not remain by the Protestants—it avails them not, and will ruin us."

"Master Kay has judged us harshly for our caution," said Margaret, with a sigh. "I saw it in his averted eyes when last we met."

"I cannot afford to regret friends who can thus wilfully misunderstand a line of conduct to which they must be aware I am compelled—absolutely compelled. Every man must feel, that the first duty of a father is to provide for the safety and interests of his family."

It was Margaret's turn to be silent, for she felt the truth of her father's observation.

"I pay dear enough for my security; my friends need not begrudge it me," continued Cornelius, in the querulous manner that now seldom if ever deserted him. "My house has been a prison to me for these last few months—I have debarred myself, willingly, from most of my pleasures—renounced my favourite haunts—dreaded to show my face in the fair light of day, as if I were a culprit—have resigned the intimacies that cheered, the business that enriched me; every sacrifice has been made. Here I sit, hour after hour, hearing nothing, doing nothing, moping my very heart away—and yet my friends will blame me; nay, my very daughter sides with them."

"No, no! dear father," said Margaret. "It is not you, it is these bad times that have parted us from our friends. God grant it may be but a passing cloud that obscures our horizon, and that when it is cleared away, all coolness, all misunderstanding may cease. God grant that our house may once more be as happy as it has been! But surely there was no reason why Father Eustace——"

"Father Eustace!" suddenly exclaimed the hitherto passive Mistress van Meeren, roused by the name into anything but a placable mood. "Father Eustace shall never darken my doors again! Well indeed has he repaid my confidence in intrusting to him the spiritual guidance of my only child!"—she forgot in her anger that this was a duty she had thrust upon him. "He excites her to disobedience against her parents' wishes, can assert no good reasons for his conduct, yet forbids a marriage every way desirable. He, a priest, meddles with family affairs that concern him not, and advises true Catholics to fly to Protestant countries. Fie on him! how have I been deceived in that man! Sancta Maria! that I should speak disrespectfully of a holy father—but it makes my blood boil to think of it."

"Yes," said Cornelius, regarding his daughter with an angry look, "since the hour when, by your own confession it would seem, under the influence of Father Eustace's advice you discarded him finally, Chievosa has never been seen or heard of."

"God knows what has become of him! I hope no harm has befallen him," exclaimed his wife.

"I trust he has been at no mischief," said Cornelius, despondingly.

"It was very bold—very unseemly, and most ungrateful," said Mistress van Meeren, with increasing vehemence, "in a young girl like you, Greta,

to break so suddenly with the man whom her parents had chosen to be her husband, and that too when she knew how much depended on the union, and the motives that made them desire it; and to do this at the very first bidding of a meddling priest! Cruel child! God alone knows what your imprudence may have brought on us."

"Our child to be the cause, perhaps, of our deaths!" said Cornelius, gloomily.

"Oh! spare me, spare me!" exclaimed Margaret, clasping her hands passionately, whilst tears flowed fast over her pallid cheek. "If I have sinned, you know not how I have suffered for it—the agonies I have endured!"

"I know it," said Cornelius, touched by his daughter's appeal, though her mother still kept her head angrily averted. "When Chievosa returned not, and the night advanced, it was the sobs that we heard proceeding from your chamber in the dead of night, when we fancied your eyes long closed in sleep, that alarmed us and hurried us to your door to know what had befallen you. No, Mary," added the father, in a gentler tone, "never shall I forget the poor child that night—still dressed—bathed in tears—clasping her crucifix—wild with sorrow. I never expected to see my own darling so unhappy."

"But," answered the still wrathful mother, "had we not surprised her in her grief we had never known what had passed. She has owned this much herself."

"Mother, I wished to keep all the harrowing pain of suspense which we have endured these two days to myself."

"It was very kindly meant, doubtless," replied Mistress Van Meeren. "I owe you thanks. Your confidence, of course, you reserve for Father Eustace. God knows, the mental torture I have endured these two days is past all description. My heart has never ceased to beat with sickening apprehension—every step that approaches the house I fancy to be Chievosa—every time the door opens I hope it may be him, and when it closes again I *feel* I have hoped in vain. No! I will not attempt to describe that most wearying, torturing of all trials to the human spirit, an indefinite apprehension of misfortune—so vague one does not know exactly in what form it may come, nor when to expect it. It is dreadful!"

"Do you think, mother, I have not felt it?" said Margaret, reproachfully, and venturing to take the hand which her mother hastily and angrily withdrew.

"Nay, you need not take on thus, my dear," said Cornelius, soothingly. "I have repeatedly reminded you, and yet you will not listen to me, that this sudden absence of Lopez Chievosa is nothing new—that from the very first day of his stay among us, and that at a time when it might have cost him all his prospects in our house, he always insisted on this privilege. This circumstance ought to be the more impressed on your mind, Mary, that you may remember the many discussions it engendered between Paul and me. He was always desirous to seize on this irregularity to get rid of the youth, who was ever his aversion. Perhaps, after all, I have been wrong not to listen to him—at any rate it is now too late to regret it; but, as I say, Mary, had it not been for Margaret's revelations you would have seen nothing unusual in Chievosa's sudden departure."

"Perhaps," said Mistress Van Meeren; "but knowing its serious motive——"

"Come, come, Margaret, weep not so—compose yourself. Why, Mary, you ought to know more about lovers' quarrels than to attach such weight to this foolish affair. Chievosa is a young man of too much sense, and knows too well the world, to lay stress upon a few hasty words spoken in anger, especially when he knows we favour his suit. Depend upon it he will remain just long enough to give Greta time for contrition, then come back as assured as ever. But Margaret, when he does return, mind, for our sakes, if not for his, he *must* be well received."

"Or I, for one, will never—never forgive you!" said the mother, vehemently. "But he'll never return," added she, despondingly, flinging herself back in her chair—"never!"

At that very instant the house-door opened, and the Spaniard's well-known tread was heard on the stair without. Margaret had scarcely time to check her fast falling tears, and her mother to assume an indifferent air, before the door of the apartment was flung open, and the cause of so much disquietude stood before them.

It often happens that when fear, however overwhelming, is found to have been groundless, we wonder at ever having yielded to it; and those who have feared most are proportionably angry with themselves, and with the cause of their mistake. Mistress van Meeren, who had never of late ventured to question the Spaniard's movements, prompted by this feeling on the present occasion, asked him peevishly what might have taken him so unceremoniously from the side of his fair bride elect, whilst Margaret, partly to conceal her tears, and partly obeying a similar impulse, turned away her head as if in childish spite. Even Cornelius was too single-hearted to veil successfully from Chievosa what the latter immediately divined upon his entrance, namely, that the substance of the late scene between himself and Margaret was known to the family, and had been but very recently under discussion.

"I might easily evade your question, or answer it with what would seem truth, however distant from it in reality; but I will not," said the young man, in reply to the not very gracious question of his future mother-in-law. "There is no time for dallying now, or I might have wished fair Margaret to assume towards you a pride and an indifference that would, perhaps, serve my cause better than the expression of my real sentiments."

Margaret remained silent, but her father replied rather hastily,

"We have heard with sorrow that you have had a foolish quarrel, but Margaret, I assure you, has very much regretted it."

Margaret's tears flowed afresh at her father's words, but it was now wounded vanity and pride, not sorrow, that caused them. Chievosa seemed willing to construe them differently, for, approaching her, he said in his most winning manner,

"These tears are the sweetest compensation for the grief I have endured at your late—and allow me to say—inconsistent conduct."

Margaret felt a suffocating sensation at her throat. Filial love and duty imperatively bade her forbear, but the spirit of her uncle was fast rising within her at the young Spaniard's presumption. She prudently buried her face in her handkerchief, that its tell-tale expression might not betray her real feelings.

"The poor child was misled by insidious advice," said the mother, willing to fill up her daughter's silence in the most advantageous manner. "She is very sorry, I assure you,—nay, Margaret, you need not be ashamed to confess thus much to the man whom you are so shortly to call husband."

Margaret involuntarily shuddered as the last word grated painfully on her ear, but continued silent.

"You have much to forgive, sweet Margaret," said Chievosa, in his most insinuating tones; "but I, too, might complain of your so easily admitting the truth of any evil report against me,—me who have worshipped you for years,—whilst your parents at once repulsed the vile aspersion."

"Youth is credulous," said Cornelius, "but it is also placable. Come, make your peace, my children; this silly discussion has already lasted too long; we ought rather to talk of fixing the happy day."

Margaret still remained mute, as if she had been of stone. Chievosa, nothing daunted, continued to address her in the tones of confident affection:

"Our love has been hitherto," he said, "like roses blooming in the midst of nettles; for it has met with strong opposition, as I am well aware, in more than one quarter; but when once these are uprooted from our path it will grow and flourish. Sweet Margaret, I know you will forgive me all the infirmities of my temper,—which is, I own, naturally hasty,—and all the deficiencies of my person"—this was said with an air of mock humility, that sat well on the speaker's faultless countenance—"when you see how sincere is my affection, not only for you, but for your parents. Luckily, or rather unluckily, I have the means of proving my devotion. Alas! I would rather it had been a treasure confined to my own bosom, my life long, than to have such cause for displaying it."

At these words the cambric was removed from Margaret's face, and her large, hazel eyes were fixed with an earnest expression on her lover's face, as if she were willing to read there the misfortune he was thus preparing.

"It was not in idle anger that I left you, as you may have supposed, Margaret; could I remain angry with you? but prompted by an anxiety that was but too well founded, I hurried to Brussels. Ask me not by what means I became possessed of the information I am about to communicate. Ask me not, I entreat. I should not—must not tell you. Trust me as you did Father Eustace, my fair Margaret, without inquiring too deeply into the sources of my knowledge. You will unfortunately find my words nearer to the truth than his."

"What new danger threatens us?" said Margaret, all girlish hesitation of manner giving suddenly way to a collected calm bearing, as her father and mother, pale with fear, stood before the Spaniard trembling like aspen leaves, unable from agitation to frame the questions that hovered on their lips.

"Would to Heaven," said Chievosa, gravely, "that I could devise a mode of announcing the impending evil without alarming you."

"Lopez, for the Virgin's sake, tell us quickly what is about to happen?" exclaimed Mistress van Meeren.

The Spaniard still hesitated.

"Suspense is the worst of evils," said Margaret.

"It is better than what I have to relate, and yet, though the misfortune is unavoidable, by preparing to meet it the shock may be lessened, and such precautions taken as may in great measure neutralise its effects. Be not frightened, good master Cornelius, it will, I hope—I trust—be but a temporary separation from your family."

"Then it is my father's safety which is threatened?" said Margaret; "but how, on what account?"

"The Inquisition," said Chievosa, in a slow, subdued tone, and, as if afraid that word were too much, he checked himself suddenly.

Mistress van Meeren screamed aloud; whilst Cornelius, turning ashy pale, sank into the nearest seat. Terror had a contrary effect upon Margaret. It sent the warm blood to her cheeks; but she trembled so violently, and her heart beat so quick, that she could neither speak nor move. Chievosa looked from one of the stricken family to the other with mournful sympathy. At length he moved towards Margaret, and said, in his own figurative manner:

"Take courage, poor weeping dove, and bid your parents share it with you. There is one at hand who will aid you or perish."

"If you can aid," exclaimed Margaret, "oh! help my father to escape before the worst has happened. Once in the hands of those dreadful men, how were it possible to save him! Oh! Lopez," she continued, passionately clasping her hands together, and gazing at him with tearful and imploring eyes,—"Lopez, you say you love me; prove it now, or never; in the hour of need is the friend known. Save my father; help him to escape to England: fly this instant; you have so many secret means of doing what you please that, if you but would, I know you could do this. Oh! do it, and my fortune—my very life is yours."

"And Margaret herself—her love?" said Chievosa, tenderly gazing upon her. "What were the casket without the pearl?"

"Is this a moment to speak thus?" said Margaret, reproachfully. "How can you think I would bargain for my father's life? Every sacrifice would I gladly, joyfully make to gain such an aim. Take him but safe to England, and I—I will remain here, if you so will it," added she hesitatingly; and, with revived energy, she resumed: "But, Lopez, I implore you lose no time; if, indeed, the danger with which we are threatened be real, every hour is worth a life. Why do you tarry? I will grant all you wish. I have told you that no price would seem too high by which I could buy my father's life."

"Would to Heaven, sweet Margaret, I could grant your request; but, alas! I have already done more than my own safety warrants in warning you—more I cannot do."

"Is it personal risks you dread?" said Margaret, disdainfully. "Point out to me but the means, and I will gladly embrace them all."

FLORENCE HAMILTON.

BY MISS JULIA ADDISON.

CHAPTER IX.—(CONTINUED.)

"SOME of Handel's oratorios, for instance," said Florence. "What can be finer than the words of the opening song in the 'Messiah?' There is not, I think, one word, or one syllable, that can be called unmusical, or unsuited to vocalisation. Nor should Haydn's canzonets be forgotten; nor 'Acis and Galatea;' nor the beautiful glees of Horsley, Webbe, and Calcott."

"The mere fact," said Wentworth, "of that sublime genius, Handel, choosing our language in preference to all others to adapt to his greatest compositions, speaks more in its praise than any other argument we could bring forward."

"It is greatly to be wished," observed Florence, "that our native composers would pay more attention to the higher branches of composition."

"Indeed it is," returned Wentworth; "for truth compels us, however reluctantly, to admit that while England has produced poets, painters, sculptors, novelists, and philosophers, whom she may fearlessly challenge the world to surpass, she has not given birth to one composer whose name deserves to rank with those of Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, or Rossini."

"It is a pity," observed Florence, "that music does not form part of the education of people of all classes in England. I believe that is one great reason why we are less musical than many other nations."

"My opinion is, that the lower classes are educated too much already," said Lady Seagrove.

"Yet their education," said Wentworth, "unfortunately only goes just far enough to make them smatterers. The fact is, that we ought either to educate a great deal more, or a great deal less."

"It should be a great deal less, then," said Lady Seagrove; "for I am sure the lower orders are conceited enough of what learning they possess at present. It only makes them above their station. One of my footmen has just left me, because, being a good accountant, he wishes to be a merchant's clerk. Florence's maid, because she can speak a little French, is looking out for a situation as governess; and Mr. Pemberton told me, the other day, that the gardener of his brother, Lord Swellington, having learned Latin at a grammar school, when a boy, has thrown by his tools, and aspires to be a schoolmaster. If the people are much more educated we shall have no servants at all."

"Pardon me," said Wentworth; "it is the rareness of such accomplishments which induces conceit in the possessors. If every footman were a good accountant, every lady's-maid understood French, and every gardener read the classics, such knowledge would not be found to make them above their stations. This may safely be asserted, because we know a case exactly analogous. A century ago, every person in the lower classes who knew how to read and write, thought himself a great scholar, but now that every pauper child of eight years old does both, reading and writing are not considered as accomplishments, but as mere matters of course, which it would be a sign of gross ignorance to be without."

"Granting this," said Lady Seagrove—"granting that it would do no

harm, I do not see that teaching the lower classes so much can do any good."

"I cannot help differing with you on that point," said Wentworth. "It appears to me that there could be no surer and more speedy way of diminishing crime than by promoting knowledge among the mass of the people. I speak not of religious knowledge alone, though that of course is of paramount importance; but should we count it nothing to add to a poor man's scanty stock of pleasures, by giving him refined as well as merely sensual ones? Were the whole English nation educated as I would have them, I feel little doubt that a large portion of the crime now existing would disappear. For how very rare is it for a thoroughly well-educated person to be tried as a criminal; how seldom is one of the upper classes executed or transported! Common as murders are grown—so common as scarcely, except in very aggravated cases, to excite any emotion—so common that we never take up a newspaper without feeling certain that we shall read of one, probably of two or three, in its columns; still, let a person in the rank and position of a gentleman commit a murder, and a sensation is produced through the whole country; and the breast of every creature, from the prince to the peasant, thrills with horror. I suppose the people amongst whom there is less crime than any other are the Scotch; and for this reason, the lower orders are better educated."

"But would not the people, if better educated," said Miss Trimmer, "interfere thtill more than they do with matterth of government, in which they have no conthern, and be thtill more dithatithfied with their rulerth?"

"Let them," said Wentworth, "if the measures of their rulers are oppressive; and of this they will be better judges in proportion as they are more enlightened. And surely the discontent of civilised and educated men is preferable to that of an illiterate multitude; for where the first would show itself by threatening life and destroying property, the other would quietly offer arguments and remonstrances. I am far from holding democratic opinions, and no one can repudiate more strongly than I do the levelling principles which are so rapidly gaining ground in the present day; but the idea, that the people have no concern with laws made for their government, and no right to appeal against them, appears to me, common as I know it is, one fitted only for the dark and barbarous ages."

Miss Trimmer, who had no extended benevolence, and who cared nothing about the rights of the people, was very glad when this conversation was over, although she had pretended to be much interested by all that Wentworth said. She was now asked to sing; and after a reasonable time spent in demurring, debating, considering, and coquetting, repeating over and over—"I can't, indeed"—"You really mutht ecthcuthe me"—"I pothitively cannot thing a note thith evening,"—and other similar speeches, with which young ladies who "sing a little" generally prelude their music,—she was prevailed upon to seat herself at the pianoforte.

"But, really," said she, when she had made final preparations for commencing, by laying her gloves, together with an embroidered satin work-bag and a laced pocket-handkerchief, beside her on the pianoforte,—"but, really, I don't think Captain Wentworth wanth to hear any more muthic to-night; I thall only tire his earthe."

Wentworth, of course, entreated her to proceed.

"Well, then, ath I am rather hoarthe I will play you a little manuthcript walth, compothed by a particular friend of mine."

"An amateur lady who has a great deal of natural talent," said Lady Seagrove.

"And who doth not know the leathe in the world about thorough bathe," added Miss Trimmer, with eagerness, as if she thought that a great recommendation.

"So much the worse," thought Wentworth; but he merely answered, "Indeed!"

Miss Trimmer opened a very small manuscript music-book, and played a waltz with such excessive airs and graces, that Wentworth could hardly refrain from laughter.

"How do you like that waltz, Captain Wentworth?" asked Lady Seagrove, when she ceased playing. "Is it not sweetly pretty?"

Wentworth assented, but not in a manner that satisfied Lady Seagrove.

"Tell me really," she said, what you think of it. You do not admire it much, I see by your manner."

"That I pertheive," said Miss Trimmer, "only he ith too polite to thay tho. Now do, pray, tell me your theriouth opinion."

Wentworth, thus urged, confessed that he thought the waltz, though very well played, in point of composition rather commonplace; and also, that the composer might study the science of harmony with advantage.

Miss Trimmer leaned her arm on the desk of the pianoforte, and laid her head upon it, in an attitude of pathetic grief.

"Captain Wentworth was not aware that the composer heard his sentence," said Lady Seagrove, laughing.

"Thay not a word, Captain Wentworth!" exclaimed Miss Trimmer. "I am but too glad that acthident hath given me an opportunity of hearing what I would give worldth alwayth to hear—the truth!"

"Then, Miss Trimmer," said little Adela, "you would like to live in the palace I read about in my book of 'Fairy Tales,' where everybody was obliged to say just what they thought."

"I thould like it beyond all thingth!" exclaimed Miss Trimmer, with enthusiasm. "I am sure you gentlemen, with your gallantry, and flattery, and fine thpeecheth, would appear very different from what you do now. For ecthample, Captain Wentworth," she continued, with a rather malicious glance at Florence, "if you were in the Palath of Truth, when a charming young lady thung to you, you might, however you withed it, be unable to thay a thingle word of praithe."

"Perhaps so, in some instances," said Wentworth, smiling, and also looking at Florence; "but where praise was honest and deserved, it would remain unaltered even though spoken in the Palace of Truth."

Chapter X.

And ostentation, miscalled charity.—Cecil.

In the course of the evening, Pemberton, who was on the most intimate terms with the family at Seagrove Hall, where he was a frequent and welcome visitor, joined the party.

"I bring notes and messages from Lady Dorcas Woollersby," he said, "whom I met at the park gate. She seems half mad about her bazaar."

One note contained an invitation to Miss Trimmer to pass a week with Lady Dorcas, and assist in the preparations, which she begged Lady Seagrove's permission to accept.

"Will not your ladythip thend thome of the thingth you have made for the bathaar?" she inquired. "I will take mine. What a pity it ith that Florenth doth not like fanthy work! I mutht thet you to give her a lecture, Captain Wentworth."

"You could not apply to a worse person," said Pemberton; "for I have heard him abuse bazaars, and fancy fairs, and fancy work, by the hour together."

"And pray, Captain Wentworth," said Miss Trimmer, "may I athk why you obthect to fanthy work?"

"One reason," said Wentworth, "is, because ladies who do a great deal are apt to neglect more intellectual and agreeable accomplishments."

"At all eventh," said Miss Trimmer, "you do not find fault with uth for working in the evening?"

"Yes, indeed I do; for there is no greater drawback to conversation —nothing that throws more dulness and heaviness over society, than the circumstance of a large proportion of the ladies employing themselves in work which must engross much of their attention."

"Yes," said Pemberton; "I have not unfrequently seen ladies sit silent for half an hour together, whilst they are counting stitches, and poring over intricate patterns. In fact, if the fancy work epidemic continues to increase at the rate it has done for the last ten years, we may expect that the next generation will see the once nearly annihilated dynasty of embroidery and tapestry, with all its attendant horrors, resume its empire among the English fair ones."

"You, of courth, thpeak hyperbolically, Mithter Pemberton?" said Miss Trimmer.

"Scarcely. Take Lady Dorcas Woollersby as an example. She and her daughters positively do nothing else from morning till night. The other day, I asked Miss Woollersby whether she had ever heard that admirable song of Parry's, called 'Berlin Wool?'—'Oh, yes,' she replied, quite innocently; 'she knew it very well, and thought it funny enough.'—'But of course,' said Lady Dorcas, 'what Mr. Parry says only applies to useless fancy work: when it is done for bazaars and charitable objects the case is quite different.'"

"And wath not her ladythip right?" said Miss Trimmer. "What immenth thumth of money are raithed by bathaarth in aid of variouth charities."

"But why," said Pemberton, "could not people give their fifty pounds, or their twenty pounds, or whatever they please to subscribe, without the fuss and parade of a bazaar."

"That would be a more ecthpenthive way," said Miss Trimmer.

"I think not, when the price of materials, and the great number of articles always left unsold, are taken into consideration, not to mention the expenditure of time, health, labour, and eyesight, among the ladies of the family."

"The lith of itemth in your account of ecthpenditure is moth formidable," said Miss Trimmer.

"Yet I could have enumerated several more. A very important one is the risk of spoiling young ladies' figures. Miss Anastatia Woollersby

has grown quite crooked, and several of her sisters will soon follow her example."

"We should not, also, omit to mention," said Wentworth, "how cruelly amateur bazaars injure those poor people who earn a subsistence (scanty and precarious enough at all times) by the sale of various articles of needlework made by themselves. How many unfortunate young women must lament the day when their aristocratic fellow-countrywomen were first seized with the mania for playing at shopkeeping, and selling their own work!"

"Which," added Pemberton, "their friends are forced to buy in large quantities, at an exorbitant price, or be stigmatised for ever by the fair vendors as mean, stingy, and shabbily-behaved people."

At night, when Wentworth retired to rest, he reflected long and anxiously on what he had at different times observed of Florence's sentiments regarding Sir Robert Craven.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that she loves him? Surely she cannot. But why then does she almost always seem embarrassed when he is mentioned?"

The young man presently set himself to examine his own heart as to the precise nature of the feelings with which Florence had inspired him, and having satisfactorily determined that he only felt the admiration and interest which one so lovely could not fail to excite, he quickly fell asleep.

Chapter XI.

I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu.

Cowper.

The next morning Wentworth rose early, and walked out into the park. The dewdrops still glittered upon the grass, the graceful deer clustered in groups among the trees, the birds sung gaily, and all nature looked fresh and blooming. Before he had gone far, he perceived Florence coming down an avenue towards him. Her bonnet had fallen back, and her face was shaded by her beautiful hair, which fell in careless profusion over her neck and shoulders. Her cheeks were tinged with a still more brilliant colour than the rose which she wore, and her countenance beamed with health and happiness. Little Adela, with her joyous face and merry laugh, was beside her, and carried a basket of wild flowers and plants, arranged with much care.

"See what beautiful flowers we have got, Captain Wentworth!" exclaimed Adela, after they had spoken a few words. "You have not been so diligent as we have."

"No, indeed," said Wentworth. "You seem to have many fine specimens in your collection, and some of them are rare. I need not ask if you are a botanist," he added, addressing Florence.

"I am very fond of the study," she replied. "I always collect the wild flowers I meet with in my rambles."

"We had a delightful walk this morning," said her sister, "round the park, and beside the river, and over a pretty little bridge."

"You make me wish that I had been with you," said Wentworth.

"Well, you may go with us to-morrow, if you can get up early enough," said Adela. "May he not, Florence?"

Florence smiled her assent, and Wentworth said that he should avail himself of this permission. The trio had now reached the highest point of some rising ground, where was seen a beautiful view.

Drawing was a favourite pursuit of Florence's, and she discovered with pleasure that Wentworth had the same fondness for it as herself. Wentworth, who had studied under a first-rate artist, and had much natural talent for the art, drew very well. After breakfast, he and Florence, seated beneath the shade of one of the fine trees in the avenue, passed several hours in painting. Lady Seagrove was much pleased with the sketches which were presented to her, and during the remainder of Wentworth's stay at Seagrove Hall, some part of every day was devoted to the delightful occupation of drawing from nature.

Wentworth became the constant companion of the morning rambles of Florence and her little sister, which were sometimes very long, though they always appeared short, through the charm of agreeable conversation. In the evenings they had music; sometimes singing duets together, which was a great delight to both; or Florence would sing alone; and Wentworth thought, as he heard her, that he could listen to her sweet voice for ever. Occasionally he would read aloud, at Lady Seagrove's request, and as he read remarkably well, this was always a pleasure to Florence; and then the two young people would have long discussions on their favourite poets and authors, and both were pleased to find how well their tastes agreed.

Several evenings during his visit they had company at home, or went out to dinner parties in the neghbourhood, but Wentworth infinitely preferred those evenings which they passed alone, and Florence was of the same opinion.

The young girl had never been so happy in her life before. It was delightful to have a companion who entered into all her pursuits, who was intellectual, imaginative, full of talent, and equally fascinating in person and manners. Although she had been much in society, and had met with many handsome and agreeable young men, she had never seen one who could for a moment be compared with Wentworth. Not any of them had ever made the slightest impression on her heart. Pemberton had always been the one in whose society and conversation she took the most pleasure; he was her favourite partner at all the balls where they met, both in London and the country; she had known him intimately from the time they were both children, and had a strong regard and friendship for him, but she considered him almost in the light of a brother, and certainly no love mingled with her sentiments for him.

Wentworth had known many beautiful and accomplished women, but he had never met with one so suited to his taste, so congenial to himself in mind and feelings, as Florence.

Thus constantly together, it was scarcely possible but that Florence and Wentworth should fall in love with each other. And both certainly were in love, although—no uncommon case—both were as yet unconscious of the fact; and not a syllable of love had been breathed between them.

One day, when a heavy shower of rain had driven the two sisters and Wentworth in from their morning's walk much earlier than usual, and

they had repaired to the library to await the breakfast hour, Wentworth happened to see the name of General Sir Walter Hamilton in one of the books which Florence had just shown him.

"Then you are related to that distinguished officer?" he said, inquiringly.

"He was my father," she replied. "I am proud of him, and venerate his memory, although I was but a child at the time he died."

"You are only distantly related to Lady Seagrove?" asked Wentworth.

"I am not related to her at all," answered Florence, "although she has ever treated me as a most kind relation, indeed, as a daughter, ever since she adopted me, on the death of my parents, whom I lost almost at the same time."

After a little more conversation, Florence somewhat hesitatingly asked her companion whether his parnets were living.

"My father is," he replied; "my mother is not."

He sighed deeply as he mentioned his mother, and for some moments seemed lost in a melancholy reverie. Florence, sorry that she had asked the question, considered how to introduce another subject. After a moment's pause she rose, and going to a bookcase, took down a large volume of beautiful engravings, and laying it on the table before him, resumed her seat by his side, saying, as she did so,

"I do not think you have seen these, though I have several times intended showing them to you."

"Let me look, too, Florence," said her sister, eagerly. "I like so much to see that great book of prints."

Florence kindly took the little girl on her knee, and the child, after asking her permission, opened the book. It happened that the print she opened on represented a youth, apparently about sixteen, standing by the bedside of his dying mother. The expression of the countenances was extremely touching, and the figures beautifully drawn. The mother's head rested on her son's arm, and while the expression of heart-rending sorrow on her still beautiful features showed that grief, more than sickness, was bowing her to the grave, there was mingled with that sorrow a feeling of deep affection for him, and a something that seemed to imply she had no one but him to love in the world; while the boy, in the midst of his sadness, appeared conscious that he was his mother's only friend and protector.

Florence, the instant she perceived this print, hastened to turn to another; but as her sister, with her arm resting on the book, was eagerly examining it, it was some moments before she could do so.

"You must begin at the beginning, Adela," she said, hastily; "this is almost the end."

But Wentworth had seen the picture, and the sight, just at the time when his feelings were touched by a reference to a subject which he could never think of without emotion, was too much for his firmness. It seemed as if the artist had depicted a scene from his own life; and he turned away his face to hide his tears.

"I am extremely sorry," faltered Florence, much distressed, "that I should have given you pain by my thoughtlessness."

"Do not say your thoughtlessness," said Wentworth, recovering him-

self. "I wish you could have known my mother, for I am sure you would have loved her."

"You were much attached to your mother?" said Florence, hesitatingly, for she judged from his manner that he did not wish immediately to quit the subject.

"Most deeply," he replied.

As he spoke he again turned over the leaves to the engraving, and gazed at it for some moments in silence, but with a face expressive of painful emotion.

"How unhappy that poor lady looks," observed Adela. "Was your mother unhappy?"

"Hush! Adela," whispered Florence, bending over. "Do not ask questions, dear."

"She was indeed unhappy," replied Wentworth, who saw by Florence's face that, although she silenced her young sister, she was anxious to have the question answered. "She died of that most dreadful and incurable of all diseases—a broken heart."

"This," he continued, drawing forth a miniature set in diamonds, which he wore round his neck fastened by a small gold chain, "is her portrait."

Florence examined it with great interest. It was that of a very beautiful woman, with rich tresses of dark auburn hair, deep blue eyes, remarkably handsome in form and colour, which, like the rest of her delicately moulded features, wore a pensive and thoughtful expression, united with great sweetness.

"What a beautiful and interesting face," exclaimed Florence, when she had gazed at the portrait for some moments in silence; "I think I never saw one more so."

"Don't you think he is very like her, Florence?" demanded Adela, in a grave, considering manner, looking from the portrait to Wentworth, and from Wentworth to the portrait again.

The resemblance was, indeed, very striking; but Florence, remembering the observation she had just made, pretended not to hear her sister's inquiry; and bending down, as if to examine the portrait still more closely, made some remark on the exquisite manner in which it was painted; but Adela, with childish pertinacity, repeated her query.

"Like her!" repeated Wentworth, in such a perfectly simple and matter-of-fact manner as showed—a rare case with very handsome men—that personal vanity, at least, was not one of his failings; "oh no, I am not like her!"

"I did not ask *you*," replied the child; "I asked Florence. Of course you can't tell. *I* think it extremely like, only you do not look near so sweet-tempered and patient."

"She must have possessed a remarkably amiable disposition," said Florence, who wished to interrupt her sister's observations.

"She had, indeed," replied Wentworth, earnestly, replacing the portrait as he spoke; "and her temper was angelic. I can truly say, that during all the years I knew her, although she had many and bitter trials—although she was treated with harshness and neglect by one who should have shown her nothing but love and tenderness, I never saw her brow clouded by anger or discontent, or heard one expression of reproach or murmuring pass her lips!"

Chapter XII.

Practised to lisp and hang the head aside.—Pope.

Lady Seagrove had been so long habituated to the society and flattery of Miss Trimmer, that that society and flattery had grown absolutely necessary to her. It was, therefore, with much pleasure that she found herself on the evening of her favourite's return, after nearly a fortnight's absence, seated on a sofa in her dressing-room, to enjoy half an hour's *tête-à-tête* before retiring to rest.

"You cannot think how I missed you, my dear Wilhelmina," she said.

"It is very kind of your ladythip to thay tho," returned Miss Trimmer, "for indeed I could hardly flatter mythelf I thould be mithed; the time theemth to have pathed tho agreeably during my abthenth."

"Why, certainly Captain Wentworth has made us miss you less than we should have done; though——"

"Oh yeth! thertainly; I do not wonder that you like Captain Wentworth; he ith a very thuperior young man, and I wath dithtrethed to be away tho much of hith vithit. Hath Thir Robert been here often whilth I wath out?"

"He has not called once, which is very extraordinary; and he has refused two or three invitations to dinner. I hope nothing has affronted him."

"No," said Miss Trimmer, rather pointedly, "I hope not."

"He is very soon affronted," said Lady Seagrove. "I wish he had but such a temper as Captain Wentworth!"

"Ah! your ladythip ith very fond of Captain Wentworth; but indeed I think you do thometimth try poor Thir Roberth temper a little."

"Do I? How?"

"Why," answered Miss Trimmer, "you know that he and Captain Wentworth never from the firth theemed to like each other, and poor Thir Robert, I think, may very naturally feel a little jealouth, when he findth Captain Wentworth domithiled here for a fortnight together."

"My dear Wilhelmina, do you really think so! I thought I could not do less than invite him, as his illness was entirely owing to an injury received in defending you and Florence."

"That ith true, perhapth; but the baronet, doubtleth, cannot help foretheeing the almoth inevitable conthequentheth."

Lady Seagrove looked inquiringly at her, and Miss Trimmer continued:

"When a handthome young man ith for a whole fortnight in the houthe with an amiable and accomplished young lady, drawing, botanithing, walking, reading, and thinging duetth with her all day long, what can the conthequentheth be, but that he *muth* fall in love with her?"

Lady Seagrove laughed. "No, no, my dear," she replied; "he has too much sense to do that. Florence Hamilton, the representative of one of the most ancient and illustrious families of England, the heiress of Seagrove Hall, to marry a man of unknown family, without even great wealth to recommend him! Why, the mere mention of such a thing is enough to make her father, General Sir Walter Hamilton, her grandfather, Lord Rowland Hamilton, and all her noble ancestors back to

the time of William the Conqueror, rise from their graves, and come and reprimand us."

"Moth undoubtedly it ith," replied Miss Trimmer; "but perhaps Florenth——"

"Florence," interrupted Lady Seagrove, "has far too much spirit to love any one so unequal to her as Captain Wentworth. I have the most perfect confidence in her. I know that she would never for one moment think of falling in love without my entire consent and approbation."

"Your ladythip thows your uthual thenth and judthment," said Miss Trimmer, with an air of profound deference, thinking to herself, as she spoke, "Lady Seagrove is still more silly and *inconsequente* this evening than she is in general."

"You know, I am sure," continued Lady Seagrove, "how much attached Florence is to me?"

"Yeth, indeed. It would be motht ecthtraordinary if she were not, when your ladythip hath been ath kind ath the betht and fondetht mother to her. And she has been with you almotht from infanthy."

"Yes, from the time she was eleven years old, when on the death of Lady Hamilton, who, as you know, survived her husband but a few months, she was sent over from India, as well as her little sister, then an infant in arms."

"How kind it wath of you," said Miss Trimmer, who knew that this was a subject on which her patroness liked to descant, "not only to adopt Florenth and promith to make her your heir, ath you did when you firtht found that her father wath ruined, and that it wath probable, from the impaired thate of the generalth conthtitution, and the fact of Lady Hamilton's being in a conthumption, that the dear girl would thoon be left an orphan; but also, when the thecond child wath born, to undertake the charge of her also."

"I could not think of the poor little things being left in a state of destitution, or to the mercy of strangers," said Lady Seagrove. "Although, as I told her mother, Florence would continue to be my heir—first, because I had made the promise when there seemed no probability of another child; secondly, because I was her godmother, and had seen and taken a fancy to her before she went to India, when she was only seven years old; thirdly, because she was about the age of my nephew, to whom I even then had set my heart on seeing her married; and, fourthly (though, of course, I did not say *that*), because I knew she was the poor dear general's favourite—I promised that Adela should be well provided for, although not an heiress; and have always treated them with equal kindness and indulgence."

Miss Trimmer murmured, "That I am thure you have;" and Lady Seagrove resumed, with a sigh, "Poor General Hamilton, his history is a melancholy example of the changeableness of human affairs! He was a brave and honourable man, but shockingly extravagant, and liberal to a fault. Then he would always be speculating, till he lost all his fine fortune; and what would have become of his two unprotected orphans, had it not been for me, Providence alone knows."

"How very, very, very kind it wath of you!" exclaimed Miss Trimmer, with animation, although she was feeling, to use her own favourite

expression, "almost bored to death," at having to listen again to a history which she had heard, chapter and verse, at least fifty times before.

The next morning, as Miss Trimmer stood practising smiles before her mirror, she thought much of her favourite scheme. This was to pretend to promote Florence's marriage with Sir Robert Craven, and then, by skilful management, contrive that the affair should end in his marrying *herself*. She thought she had observed that Sir Robert was quite inclined to like and admire her; not, certainly, as much as he did Miss Hamilton, but when he found that Florence would never love him, "Thurely," she said, half aloud, as she moved backwards and forwards, for the thirtieth time, before the mirror, in order to perfect herself in a peculiar manner of walking, or rather tripping, across a room, which she had admired in the Comtesse de Trenise, and was particularly desirous of imitating correctly—"thurely I muth contratht very advantageouthly with Mith Hamilton, whothe frigid mannerth and behaviour are enough to chill his love completely; and he will, like Romeo, turn with gratitude to thome kind charming Juliet, who will not theorn or reject him. But I mutht play my game well, and it is one that will require no little care and judgment."

Miss Trimmer sat down and continued meditating, while her fingers were busily employed in constructing an elaborate ornament of feathers and flowers for her hair. Just as she had completed this *coiffure*, and was taking a last admiring gaze at the reflection of her round, plump, simpering face, she heard a gentle tap at the door. Not knowing who it was, she hastily deposited the flowers in a little box on her toilet, and then retreating from the mirror, and seating herself on a chair at some distance, with Milton's "Paradise Lost" in her hand, which she wished to appear to be studying intently, called out, "Come in;" and little Adela entered.

"Miss Trimmer," said the child, "will you not come and bid Captain Wentworth good-by? He is going in a few minutes."

"Ith he indeed!" said Miss Trimmer, closing her book, after carefully marking the place. "What, before luntheon? Where ith he?"

"In the library."

"Who ith with him?"

"Nobody. Lady Seagrove and Florence are speaking to a poor woman."

"Now then," said Miss Trimmer to herself, "is my time for a little private conversation with Captain Wentworth. His preference for Florence is most provoking. He hardly spoke or looked at me once yesterday, though I did my utmost to be fascinating. But I'll make him remember it. No one shall slight my charms with impunity."

RAILWAY SPECULATION.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

It is astonishing how soon a spirit of gambling is created. The boy who purchases "three throws for a penny," is almost certain, if he have a second penny, to expend it in another three throws; the luckless individual who is deluded into joining the raffles at bazaars, is never satisfied without he suffers a second loss; the singularly sanguine personage who, dazzled by the advertisement headed "A Fortune for a Guinea," places his money in a Derby sweep, is by no means enlightened as to the real state of the case by losing one guinea—he will, almost assuredly, send another after it; and, in the same way, the railway speculator, fortunate or unfortunate, *keeps on;* the fire has been kindled, and it will burn, under ordinary circumstances, so long as there shall be a morsel of fuel left.

When it happens that this spirit of gambling has arisen in numbers at one time, and the direction taken has been the same, we have what is termed "a mania." We have the public mind brought into that state that on this one point it cannot be considered sane or healthy, and instead of being afflicted with only some hundreds of monomaniacs in our land, we are burdened with tens of thousands.

Railways do undoubtedly offer a tremendous field for speculation. You cannot fix the value of railway shares. The worth of a railroad is so entirely dependent upon circumstances, that no one can absolutely say so-and-so is its precise extent. Railway shares highly valuable to-day, may be comparatively worthless ten years hence, and *vice versâ;* and it is the possibility of this change that creates such numerous and tempting opportunities to those who are inclined to speculate or to gamble to gratify their inclinations to the utmost. And if anybody should take exception to the word "gamble," let us ask, can any other term be used in regard to railway speculation? We are not now speaking of the purchase of shares as an investment—the buying them for the sake of the dividend they will produce; we are referring to what is termed "dabbling in shares—the frequently purchasing with the object of selling within a short period at a better price, and so making an immediate profit. Now, without passing any very harsh judgment on this practice—nay, without even denying that a man of sufficient means may, if it so please him, follow it as a business, it is right we should bear in mind that the system may be designated as pure gambling; as much gambling, reader, as any other system of risk or chance which is so characterised. If I buy shares upon the chance of their "going up," or "bear" them upon the likelihood of their "going down," I gamble; there can be no doubt about it; and without, as I have said, pressing the question as to the morality of the proceeding—leaving it open, at all events, for others to decide—I repeat, it should be confessed at once that in this transaction I am absolutely and positively a "gambler."

The fact is, there is hardly anybody who does *not* gamble in some way or other. Immediately there exists a doubt as to value, transactions in connexion with the doubtful property become, of course, tinctured with risk. A man buying under such circumstances, buys a chance. The property may or may not be worth what he is about to give for it; he may win or lose by the transaction. Very well; we do not see that this, as a solitary case, could be called gambling, otherwise you would prohibit nearly all buying and selling, for doubt is more or less present in all

business dealings. But we think there can be no dispute that if the buyer in this case, not satisfied with having purchased one risk, should purchase twenty or thirty chances, so that he might have a great amount of property, the value of which neither he nor any one else could tell, because it would have—could have—no fixed value—because its worth, as he knew when he bought it, was entirely dependent on events, and might be to-morrow wonderfully elevated or frightfully depressed—there can be no dispute that this man would be in reality and truth "a gambler." His money would be invested in chances, just as much as the coin of the player at *rouge-et-noir*. The speculator in railway shares gambles; he buys risks, even as the billiard-player—the speculator hoping that the shares may rise or fall, as he wants them; the billiard-player trusting that the game may be won or lost, as may suit his stake or his betting-book. And we do hope that the circumstance of this similarity of motive, this sameness of term by which the course of action noted may in either case be truly designated, may be a little more regarded than it is. Don't let my pious friend turn up his eyes when he hears I lost half-a-crown last night at whist, knowing all the while, the sinner, that he has this day purchased fifty Diddleton and Diddleburys, forty Carleton and Marltons, and twenty Wisberry and Fisberry Junctions, because he has a conviction they will all go up prior to the "settling," and, therefore, he has done wisely in purchasing the chance. He says I gambled when I played at whist, and points after my half-crown. Well, what did he do when he bought the Diddleton and Diddleburys, and other shares, in the hope to gain some hundreds of pounds? Reader, let us be a little charitable; let us look deeper than we are accustomed to do into our own hearts; let us more closely examine our own actions, and it may be that we shall blush—blush scarlet, at finding that the very thing we have condemned so hotly, so unmercifully in others, we ourselves have been fully guilty of; only, in our case, they have been so wrapped up, so screened and concealed, that even in our own breasts their true nature has not been recognised.

But now there is another remark, in reference to this railway speculation, which we should wish to make. We have come to the conclusion that, say what you will, you cannot disprove the assertion, that it is gambling, although, as we have intimated, the amount of moral guilt attaching to it is a question upon which we are not prepared, and do not care to enter at the present time. But, having decided that it is gambling, an unpleasant inquiry suggests itself: Does it not oftentimes involve something—(we really are almost afraid to put the question)—does it not oftentimes involve *something of cheating?* What we mean is this. If, reader, you and I and others sit down to cards together, playing for stakes, we gamble; in a darker or a ligher sense we gamble; but we play fairly—it is all open and aboveboard; if I win, I do so either through better luck or superior skill, or both; if an opponent wins, he does so through the same causes; we all fully understand the chances, and are prepared for them. It is true the skill of each player may not be known at the outset, but this is quickly evidenced, and after the first deal or so, the combatants are aware exactly how the chance runs.

Now, compare this with the mode of operation in share speculations. Smith comes to me, and he has just seen Brown, the Director of the Diddleton and Diddlebury Line, and Brown has whispered to him the mysterious words, "Diddletons are good." This is quite enough for both of us. Smith and I call the cab with the best-looking horse in it,

and promise the man an extra shilling to take us at top-speed to our broker, Jones. When we get there, we command Jones immediately to leave his sandwich and his sherry (for the poor man was having his lunch), and going straightway into the Stock Exchange, to buy for us every "Diddleton and Diddlebury" that is to be bought. Very well; he goes; and, inasmuch as it is only we, and one or two other highly-favoured mortals, who have heard those tremendously portentous words from the mouth of really "good authority," "Diddletons are good," the jobbers, who have orders to sell given by poor wretched holders, who having watched painfully, day by day, the regular and steady decline of "Diddletons," have come, with a sigh, to the conclusion that said "Diddletons" are *bad*, and so have resolved to sell and save what they may—these jobbers, in their ignorance, sell to us better-informed personages, through our broker, plenty of "Diddletons" at a price which, under the altered circumstances hinted at in Brown's communication, is not more than three-fourths, perhaps, of what might be estimated to be their present value. Now, here you come in with the very monstrous doctrine that "a thing is worth what it will fetch!" I deny it; a thing is oftentimes worth treble what at the moment it will fetch—oftentimes not one-half. Here is a poor man who has something to sell that I want, but, unfortunately for him, it is almost a matter of absolute necessity that he should sell, while, comparatively speaking, it is of no real moment to me that I should buy. I offer him for his article about one-fourth of its value. He remonstrates—he argues—he pleads—he points out clearly the baseness of the offer. My reply is, that that is my price, and I will give no more. I say this coolly and unconcernedly; I know that, atrocious as my terms are, they must be accepted; and they *are* accepted. But will anybody say, that because this poor man, in his distress, in his poverty, in his dire extremity, in his critical and desperate situation, closed with my offer, because it was possible that he might not get another, and ruin already had its clutch upon him—will any one venture to say, that because I was mean and paltry, because I was hard-hearted and cruel, because I pressed down with the hand with which I should have raised up; that because baseness on the one side, and misery on the other, brought about a sale for but a quarter of what should have been the purchase-money, that, therefore, these goods were only worth what they fetched?

And again. There is brought to me something which is for sale. I ask its price, and I am told a sum that I know from some source or other is quite inadequate. Am I justified in taking advantage of the seller's ignorance? Can I say to myself, Does it stop the murmurings of conscience?—"a thing is worth what it will fetch." What a falsehood! It will fetch, if I close the bargain, just one-fourth of its value. When ignorance and cheating are banished from this poor ungodly world, a thing will, indeed, be worth what it will fetch; but not till then, reader; not till then. And yet—oh, awful fact, oh, humiliating confession!—now that our task is concluded, and we are just about laying down our pen, whither are our thoughts unconsciously travelling? Why, we are quietly considering (what a difference there is between preaching and practice!) whether there is any chance of our meeting with Brown in the course of the day? And wherefore? Because we want to ascertain whether Brown's opinion is *still* that "Diddletons are good," for, if so—yes, we will, we cannot help it—it may be gambling, it may be cheating—but we must go and buy another hundred of said Diddletons and Diddleburys!

FORTUNE AND MERIT.

A DRAMATIC SKETCH.—BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

SCENE.—*A Library.*

Lester. And shall we give
Each venture up, if at the onset Fate
Should seem to frown? With the first check retire,
Unmanned, cast down;—and onward press alone,
When Fortune meets us and with smile serene
The path illumes? These tomes can tell
The noblest, best of deeds achieved by man,
Such teaching give not!

The Recluse. Yet destiny is written, and 'tis vain
To struggle 'gainst the record! Fortune's smiles
Are not by high deservings always won;
'Twere easier far to say where will alight
The thistle-down that floats upon the breeze,
Than Fortune's recompences. He shall tell,
Who with defeat recals the flattering dawn
Of his life's day, who joined the warring path,
His mind in its young spring, care on his heart
Not traced its iron pen—to whom was hope,
In beauty radiant, from deception free;
His dreaming future, though of high emprise,
Soared not beyond what reason stern approved;
The fair desert of gifts as his might be,
The gifts that make men nearest unto gods,
With energy combined, and dauntless will,
To action urged by strongest fount that wells
Within man's soul, ambition! He shall tell,
When on his course hath been each effort foiled,
A heart-worn struggler, left upon the path
Verging Despair's abyss—his sun gone down
On darken'd waters, where but meets his ear
The echoed shouts, ovations loud that speak
Some compeer's triumph, who with less deserts
Hath reached the goal. His spirit crushed shall tell,
If this the lesson of his life hath taught,
That destiny is written, and 'tis vain
To struggle 'gainst the record.

Lester. And he who wins the goal?

The Recluse. Wins oft amazed! Him shalt thou ask,
When from his sunny sea the haven hailed—
The glad reality—the substance won,
That lived alone before for him in dreams;
Ask him what aids were his upon his path,
From whence scarce known or why bestowed,
Like fairy visits to the cobbler's hut,
For whom, whilst slumb'ring hours of night away,
The elfins worked unseen, and morn revealed
To his all-wondering gaze, was done
The day's allotted toil. As such the aids,
Which to command is far from merit's power,
But which to gain is so to gain success
Without them never. He shall tell,
If, midst his high achievments' wreaths of fame,
His thoughts have turned not to the bygone time,
Recalling those left struggling on the path,
If in those moments hath a voice to him
Ne'er whispered—Fortune!

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter XII.

What was it that urged me thus on from place to place and from crime to crime? Often as it was my lot to fall into the snare of death, my progress through immortal pathways was real; never was I nearer to that which is holy in life than when snatched into the whirlpool of sin. Was it that my worst crime was to be my last, and that thus a salvation increasing in strength as it advanced, and a self-corroding soul eating deeper into itself at every step, like invisible steeds, dragged on my car? If such conjunction swayed my destiny, when was the self-tormented to be at peace, and its providential associate to triumph? Not long hence; I had reached the porch of my temple, and though the spirit of love was enshrined only inside, the door of the vestibule stood half-open before me; a step more and I should tread within the sanctuary.

Meantime it rested with me to wind up my career of iniquity; in truth, to be consistent with my character. I had not yet done: it remained for me to inquire the fate of Thanatos, to take comfort at his arrest, and his subsequent committal. He had mixed with the innocent out of mingled curiosity and fear, to learn if I were dead; he, among the rest, deemed my revival miraculous, and my evidence against him superhuman; he, therefore, confessed. He was sentenced to the galleys, and the thought of his chains soothed me for a time.

During my first ramble I was attracted to the house of a sculptor: the ringing sound of his mallet stirred an emotion within my breast which did not belong to the hour then present; its influence and the love of art drew me forward. The door was open and the sculptor within sight at work: his hand was engaged on a monument; his back being turned towards the door he did not see me enter. I, therefore, saluted him and inquired what work he was engaged on. He replied, without looking round, "It is the effigy of one lately entered on the lists of the Almighty." The voice was familiar to me, I knew it as of yesterday; I recognised the monumental figure also; it was true to the life—that life to which I had put a period: and the familiar voice, though not Marsino's, gave at the moment a strange reality to the marbled existence of the dead. Without observing his face, I saw by the curly head, and felt by the voice, that the sculptor was my old friend; the sound of his mallet and chisel rang in my ears as it had done of old: I was at Rome again among those I loved ere my nature had become debased. I longed to speak again, to ask after the mother, the little children; but the monument forbade me utterance, and I departed with a heavy heart, thinking to return.

I wished to see the Countess of Marsino: she had reached Milan, had mourned, had attended mass, and, according to report, was to be seen sometimes at the cathedral. The thought of again standing before that structure made me tremble, but the tendency in me to resist the influence of such emotion was often strong in me. I resolved to see her in the sanctuary, and secretly join in her devotions. I went alone, and penetrated the wide and chilly stillness of that universe of prayer, for so may

be named its immeasurable proportions, which seem to diminish the greatness of the spirit, and confine it to its house of clay. I traversed those marble plains; each chapel a sinner's world; the cupola an overbrimming heaven, its angels inviting all below to ascend its canopy, deep and holy. Oh, raptures such as then arose in my heart, why do ye ever droop, when will ye be eternal? A new monument attracted me as I walked along: it was the one I had seen already, and which had been since erected in the Marsino chapel. There lay the gasping form of my victim, for the lingering breath which the sculptor had infused into it was that of the dying. The agony of departing life was the sole emotion of the figure; there it was, an expression fixed and unchangeable on which the children of the future would gaze, as those of to-day. I read the short inscription, it ran thus:

"To the Memory of the Count of Marsino:
THE LAST OF HIS RACE."

I entered the chapel, and examined every part of the monument. While sadly employed in observing its beauties the light sound of approaching footsteps reached me, and I retired behind the base of the tomb. A female, dressed in black, knelt before the railings outside; her face was veiled. She was silent for some moments, when she commenced a prayer. I knew by the voice that it was Æthra, the widow of Marsino. "Oh, holy Virgin! surrounded by thy glittering train, thou who hast been mortal, and knowest the heart of woman, obtain me pardon for my sad confession that I still love my husband's murderer. I have struggled to banish his memory from my heart; I have prayed that his image might be driven from me; I have shed penitent tears; but all my efforts are vain. His presence haunts me; I converse with him in the company of others, in solitude, in prayer; I am for ever his! Oh, intercede for me with thy blessed Son; give me support; strengthen me with a righteous purpose, or my soul is lost.

"In the gloom of the convent I should behold him still; at the vesper hour his smile would reach me; in the hymn of midnight I should hear his voice; in the dream of Paradise I should walk side by side with him; in the tomb I should hope still to rise again in his arms. Oh, thou who once didst love, have mercy! intercede for me with thy Son."

This was her prayer; and, having said it, she sobbed.

While she gave utterance to her pious sentiments of love, I was rivetted in amazement to the spot where I was. I had become, by a concurrence of time and circumstance, the possessor of her most recent thoughts and feelings: she had entrusted her secrets to the air; she had bidden their sad melody ascend to the Virgin's ear, that they might be commended to her Redeemer; she had called on the milder powers of Heaven to hear, and mediate; she had implored an audience of the Virgin and her virgin train: but I was the hearer; I had shared in the counsels of her breast, had looked up to where she gazed, piercing the atmosphere of cherubim. But beyond that I knew nothing, but that her prayer was heard by me.

At the time of vespers I entered the cathedral again; I knelt before the monument, and gazed on the still dying figure with admiration and wonder; for I had not anticipated such mature skill in the artist, whom I had known in early days. The eye was marvellously expressed,—as if immortal mind had infused into it a mortal sorrow; the pained features

were at once exalted and subdued to heroic magnanimity, as if imperishable thought had been really there; the statue seemed steeped in soul, though soul was absent; the destructible gave evidences of immortal prospects, convincing to all but the cold philosophers of the race, that man was to be the future explorer of the universal, as now of the territory below. And it is a great thought to immortalise the dead in dying marble; to exhibit Death ready to claim his prey, ever expectant, but ever waiting in vain!

I had a presentiment that Æthra would come again, and kneel by me. It was a feeling to be believed in, as co-relative with the All-prescient. Prescience originally extended to events near at hand, but the mental darkness in which man sleeps has diminished its powers; for the unexercised faculty declines and shrinks into a mere vestige of thought. For my part, I was of a disposition not to compromise my human rights, but rather to seek for their precedents in the records of prophets and sages.

Presentiment has seldom deceived me, and I have become an adept in the interpretation of its signs. Whomsoever I meet I judge of; I question his chances of life and death, prosperity, and ruin; and forgetting what I have done, I often hear unexpectedly of my predictions being realised. Of him whose fate is pending, though his health seem perfect, I say, inwardly, thou art surely doomed. If, too, I hear of the sudden decease of one whom I knew well, but had not thought of, I feel that I could have foretold it.

Æthra came and knelt beside me, but knew me not, for I was concealed in my mantle. I was satisfied with this result, and took no notice of her; the success of my mental prediction, and the conjunction of two beings situated as we were in reference to each other, made the scene complete.

Chapter XIII.

On the following day I was again on my knees before the monument. Æthra came. I placed my hand upon hers, saying,

"Dear, lovely sufferer."

"Oh, Heaven! it is Adonäi," said she.

"It is, it is," was my reply.

"Canst thou look upon that monument?" inquired Æthra.

"We are fellow sufferers," I again replied.

"Thou hast been at the point of death, and on my account. Thank Heaven thou art restored!"

"Let us pray for the dead."

"He lives, and gazes on me with ghastly looks."

"He died bravely."

"Ah, he was an affectionate, good husband."

"And is in heaven."

"He proved his love for me by his rash challenge, though he did suspect my honour."

"His was the fate of a thoughtless and impetuous mortal."

"He was always generous and indulgent towards me."

"His loss is irreparable, and it was I destroyed him."

"Oh! thou wert not to blame. I know it all, unhappy woman that I am!"

"Had I bared my breast to his dagger, my misery would have been now ended, and thou wouldst have been happy still."

"Generous man! It was never intended that I should be happy, unless——"

"Thou hast lost a husband who loved thee well, and by this hand he perished."

"Say no more, I beseech thee."

"This monument is a reproach to me. How can I expiate my deed?"

"Thou hast suffered already. Happy wilt thou be henceforth in other lands, far away from this scene. I shall be wretched, solitary——"

"Thou canst not love again; but thy virtue will reconcile thee to thy altered lot."

"Never, O Adonäi! Thou dost not know me, or thou wouldst not draw a picture which presents so calm a contrast to my despair. I am but a woman. My fault is that I am too confiding."

"I know thy inestimable worth; I know thee better than thou knowest thyself. Thou who weddest, at a tender and susceptible age, the object of thy choicest affections—who, in the bloom of youth, hast been deprived of all that made life delightful—canst thou be happy more, except in the tranquil recollection of an early love?"

"Pardon these tears; they will flow. I cannot stop them. Unhappy woman that I am!"

"Give me thine hand, Æthra, and tell me if I have said truly."

"Look at my tears; they best answer for me."

"Oh, Æthra! look up at this monument with those tearful eyes; explore the countenance of an indulgent husband; penetrate the thought which veils his wonted looks with agony; reflect that his soul is present with us, that he sees our inmost thoughts before they can be spoken; and then tell me if in thy widowhood thou hast a greater consolation than to recal his virtues, and to mourn his loss?"

My words convulsed her. She sobbed aloud, wept with the wail of the destitute, and, rising, left the tomb in a woful state of disorder. I continued on my knees until she had reached the doors, and then arose; but I could not grieve at the moral experiment I had made, though my part was diabolical.

Be not angry; let not thy countenance change with indignation, O Man! Maturer age has been to me the period of active repentance. My misdeeds have established within my soul a purgatory, which torments without consuming, which swallows up every wicked thought by turns, and gnaws away the evil which is interwoven in its spiritual texture, and, after purification, still retains it in torture. Conscience is the seat of this unquenchable volcano, which is thus situated among the brightest prospects of a pensive soul; for over its aspiring heights, as if no eruption scoured the heavens, the sun of imagination rises and sets in its diurnal course, but to renew not hope, to revive not emotion. I shall probably know no respite in this world; for repentance, once necessitated to come into being, never dies, though, finally, it may alternate with the merciful indulgence of reflecting on misspent days, which can never be recalled.

The theories with which I started in my career having thus been put into lengthened practice, were, after a time, absorbed wholly in active life. I had less occasion to observe the course of my emotions as I advanced; their signification becoming plainer, their vibrations less deep

within me. I ceased even to premeditate crime, but had a feeling that nature, though under perversion, as if reconciled to my views, would either lead me into scenes of action, or divert my career into a fresh channel. Of one thing I was certain even at that time: were my hopes to be realised in the possession of Adora, I should at least sin no more!

New theories sprang up out of the events in which the old had merged, and, in their turn, anticipated the generalisation of highest truths.

Having ascertained the movements of the countess, I resolved to watch for her in the street, and, should we meet, to accost her; but from some cause then not evident, but which influenced my feelings, I found myself irresolute from day to day, and unable to put my purpose into effect. This phenomenon excited my wonder, and thus I was led to the analysis of my state of mind. On comparing it with similar states of an earlier date, I discovered that my difficulty with respect to addressing Æthra in the public way had relation to effect.

In the instance of Giuditta, I remembered that I had instinctively chosen the moonlight, the storm, the chapel of the cathedral for my rehearsal of the great scene—the open illuminated country, the storm-whirling heavens, on the one hand—the expanse of pavement and decorated walls on the other, forming part of the perfect idea. With Orazio, again, I had selected the court of my palace, and a sky, through which all that was passing on earth might be witnessed on high, and signalled on by the couriers of light to the farthest Eternal. It was clear, then, that I had been suspended between the instincts of pure taste and reason; I was on a crisis wherein harmonious impulse, whose analysis had been delayed, had gained strength by repeated action, and, when the opportunity occurred, had asserted its claim to be enrolled among those principles of reason which define the laws of beauty. Taste refused to accept the public road as a stage for the tragic scene, and reason admitted the objection.

Even in my descriptions of disorder, I had ever sought for some feeling of harmony which might connect the cavern or the wilderness, by distant links, with the great chain which binds the laws of order together. This was from the same impulse of intrinsic harmony, the truth of which had not been rationally developed within me before. The suggestions of feeling, however genuine, fell far short of the convictions of reason as elements of power. The results of feeling are obscure; to it, indeed, are due those phenomena of thought which are grand but formless, those creations of immature genius which take only a secondary place in composition, and are liable, like living things of a lower grade, to become the prey of the clearsighted thinker. This law discovered, I found at once a knowledge of it essential to that aristocratic temper of mind to which works of highest art are due.

And now no longer embarrassed by undefined struggles after the perfect in the beautiful relations of a picture, I decided unhesitatingly on the Marsino chapel, with its monument, as the fit scene of my next essay at study, the conversion of an eventful life into a great drama. The architecture of the place was fine; a group of figures in serious conversation about the monument, which rested within its retired walls, would give sombre vitality to the scene. The development of my principles led to the happiest triumphs, and, in searching immortal works, I have found that the successful writer, if the classical conceptions of greatest authors may be so judged, has ever been under the influence of the same law.

But at the same time that this new law shed its light on me, I made other discoveries in the metaphysics of composition which threatened a fatal end to my prospects. I found that the severe study which I had bestowed on my art had gradually failed to produce that excitement which at first had sustained me in my career. I had begun to look on the various phases of suffering with indifference. This circumstance greatly alarmed me, until, on investigation, I saw that its origin might be satisfactorily explained. I had, in fact, collected within myself the richest stores of knowledge, and what was thus treasured up had arranged itself in my memory like the groups and figures distributed through a gallery of art. There being a time when the collector of marbles and other forms of art feels disposed to relax in his efforts, deeming his collection sufficiently perfect, I, in viewing the contents of my spiritual gallery, saw its deep avenues filled with choicest works of thought. Every shadow of death there had form; every feature of grief, pity, terror, and despair was there imaged. I saw but one vacant recess—the One destined to hold a colossal figure of pure Reason. That masterpiece was to harmonize with the rest, to be the most perfect, to render all complete. It was to crown my experimental toils; and whatever might present itself after its elevation would be absorbed within this concluding work.

If an artist, who hitherto had sculptured his works in stone, had suddenly discovered the pure marble of Paros, his pleasure could not have been greater than mine was on learning of what material my next work was to be. To explain my position more fully, the labours of my past days had been spent in emotion. All that I had done had feeling. But the time had come when my toils were to be only intellectual. Pure intellect was to be the material on which my future energies were to be exhausted.

I have said that my excitability had diminished in a manner which alarmed me. This I first observed distinctly when I saw the widow's grief at her husband's tomb. I had seen nothing like it since Giuditta declared her hopeless love in the garden. But when she, angelic being, threw her anguish into my arms, and wept upon my breast, I shared in her terrible emotion. Now, however, I had felt no pity for Æthra, while the witness of her anguish, which was not less intense. I observed it, but only as a duplicate of what was already present in my mind. It therefore seemed scarcely worth the pains of being recorded. I then learned the reason of this. I saw that one good example was sufficient for the wants of the poet. But, thought I, if the duplicate have not the power to excite, in what consists the virtue of the original? With this thought I pondered the anguish of Giuditta, and found myself still unmoved. But though insensible even to the memory of pain, I saw the pain itself most vividly. It appeared embodied in an intellectual form, and was as palpable as when Giuditta suffered in my arms. I saw it—a vision perfect, beautiful, and pure. It portrayed the shape which is allotted to a former anguish, but was cold and classical. The fine ideal was alone left, that only which could not change or perish.

The truth was, that feeling, which is ephemeral, had been absorbed in intellect, which is lasting. The mortal had merged into the immortal.

The discovery of the highest law of art thus made, I began to reflect on its application to myself. I had travelled over the world of passion; I had undergone more suffering even than I had witnessed in others. My soul had been almost rent asunder in its conflicts. I had run the race

with Nature in the tempest, even as I had equalled her in her love, her brightness, and dwelt with her in most peaceful mansions. These great and terrible reverses were more than one mind could bear. I sometimes felt myself, amidst the whirlwind, unable to arrest my course, and sometimes a wanderer, without my reason, in the plains of eternity. It was, therefore, high time either to taste tranquillity or to die. I could bear no more to be buffeted by the contending influences of things. But Nature is conservative, and she not only arrested me, but pointed out to me the seats of Divine philosophy. She flattered me that I need endure no more anguish; that, having passed through these dread ordeals, I might henceforth observe with intellect alone, and, by degrees, merge the activity of feeling in that pure and placid power.

Chapter XIV.

All this I believed—vain man!—and, in the pride of my heart, I saw a peaceful future. I thought that I had reaped a fortune of glory, and should enjoy the fruits of my labours in an intellectual paradise. Oh, Adora! thou whose image reigned within me, while I dared thus to hope, what prospect was there of peace, except in thee? If the possession of pure delight were attainable, it was thy soul which revealed it to me, and not the arts by which I was enslaved.

It was in the cathedral that all the preceding reflections came across me; but, lost in a new species of ecstasy, such as encircles and almost realises hope, I had forgotten where I was; but, on coming to myself, I saw the horrid monument before my eyes.

"Oh, thoughtless Marsino!" exclaimed I, in wild despair, "why didst thou rush into thy destruction? Behold the misery thou hast entailed on thy survivor!"

I looked down, and saw Æthra there; and in a moment the theory of calm which had so recently developed itself within me, and which proposed to intellectualise all emotion, was put to the test of practice, and it failed. I was enraged at the sight of Æthra, who seemed to stand between me and the one I so deeply loved. I desired to be calm, but strove in vain against some overwhelming impulse. I would have left the cathedral, but I thought that figures wandered like shadows round the monument, and made signs for me to approach them. I could not resist their influence, and remained. At that moment Æthra looked at me with affection, upon which I was seized with a species of fury, and returned her love by pouring the most fiendish sentiments into her ear.

"Woman," I said, "I know thy falsehood, and hate thee."

"Oh, Powers!" replied she, with hands already clasped, "what words are these? I am lost for ever!"

"The dead also hated thee."

"Oh that he were here to save me!"

"Behold him!"

"Hast thou no pity, Adonäi?"

As she said this, she gave expression, in her looks and words, to the natural truth of her heart, which, though rarely brought out, was not the less affecting. It touched me deeply, and every kind thought that I had ever entertained towards her returned. From her my mind reverted to her sister, and thence to Adora, the beloved one.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER VIII.—(CONTINUED.)

THE RUINED CONVENTUAL CHURCH.

LADY ASSHETON did not tarry long within the entrance hall, for such it was, but conducted her guests through an arched doorway on the right into the long gallery. One hundred and fifty feet in length, and proportionately wide and lofty, this vast chamber had undergone little change since its original construction by the old owners of the abbey. Paneled and floored with lustrous oak, and hung in some parts with antique tapestry, representing scriptural subjects, one side was pierced with lofty pointed windows, looking out upon the garden, while the southern extremity boasted a magnificent window, with heavy stone mullions, though of more recent workmanship than the framework, commanding Whalley Nab and the river. The furniture of the apartment was grand but gloomy, and consisted of antique chairs and tables belonging to the abbey. Some curious ecclesiastical sculptures, wood carvings, and saintly images were placed at intervals near the walls, and on the upper panels were hung a row of family portraits.

Quitting the rest of the company, and proceeding to the southern window, Dorothy invited Alizon and her brother to place themselves beside her on the cushioned seats of the deep embrasure. Little conversation, however, ensued; Alizon's heart being too full for utterance, and recent occurrences engrossing Dorothy's thoughts, to the exclusion of everything else. Having made one or two unsuccessful efforts to engage them in talk, Richard likewise lapsed into silence, and gazed out on the lovely scenery before him. The evening has been described as beautiful; and the swift Calder, as it hurried by, was tinged with rays of the declining sun, whilst the woody heights of Whalley Nab were steeped in the same rosy light. But the view failed to interest Richard in his present mood, and after a brief survey he stole a look at Alizon, and was surprised to find her in tears.

"What saddening thoughts cross you, fair girl?" he inquired, with deep interest.

"I can hardly account for my sudden despondency," she replied; "but I have heard that great happiness is the precursor of dejection, and the saying, I suppose, must be true, for I have been happier to-day than

with Nature in the tempest, even as I had equalled her in her love, her brightness, and dwelt with her in most peaceful mansions. These great and terrible reverses were more than one mind could bear. I sometimes felt myself, amidst the whirlwind, unable to arrest my course, and sometimes a wanderer, without my reason, in the plains of eternity. It was, therefore, high time either to taste tranquillity or to die. I could bear no more to be buffeted by the contending influences of things. But Nature is conservative, and she not only arrested me, but pointed out to me the seats of Divine philosophy. She flattered me that I need endure no more anguish; that, having passed through these dread ordeals, I might henceforth observe with intellect alone, and, by degrees, merge the activity of feeling in that pure and placid power.

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"What saddening thoughts cross you, fair girl?" he inquired, with deep interest.

"I can hardly account for my sudden despondency," she replied; "but I have heard that great happiness is the precursor of dejection, and the saying, I suppose, must be true, for I have been happier to-day than

I ever was before in my life. But the feeling of sadness is now past," she added, smiling.

"I am glad of it," said Richard. "May I not know what has occurred to you?"

"Not at present," interposed Dorothy; "but I am sure you will be pleased when you are made acquainted with the circumstance. I would tell you now if I might."

"May I guess?" said Richard.

"I don't know," rejoined Dorothy, who was dying to tell him. "May he?"

"Oh no—no!" cried Alizon.

"You are very perverse," said Richard, with a look of disappointment. "There can be no harm in guessing; and you can please yourself as to giving an answer. I fancy, then, that Alizon has made some discovery."

Dorothy nodded.

"Relative to her parentage?" pursued Richard.

Another nod.

"She has found out she is not Elizabeth Device's daughter?" said Richard.

"Some witch must have told you this," exclaimed Dorothy.

"Have I indeed guessed rightly?" cried Richard, with an eagerness that startled his sister. "Do not keep me in suspense. Speak plainly."

"How am I to answer him, Alizon?" said Dorothy.

"Nay, do not appeal to me, dear young lady," she answered, blushing.

"I have gone too far to retreat," rejoined Dorothy, "and therefore, despite Mistress Nutter's interdiction, the truth shall out. You have guessed shrewdly, Richard. A discovery *has* been made—a very great discovery. Alizon is not the daughter of Elizabeth Device."

"The intelligence delights me, though it scarcely surprises me," cried Richard, gazing with heartfelt pleasure at the blushing girl, "for I was sure of the fact from the first. Nothing so good and charming as Alizon could spring from so foul a source. How and by what means you have derived this information, as well as whose daughter you are, I shall wait patiently to learn. Enough for me you are not the sister of James Device—enough, you are not the grandchild of Mother Demdike."

"You know all I know, in knowing thus much," replied Alizon, timidly. "And secrecy has been enjoined by Mistress Nutter, in order that the rest may be found out. But oh! should the hopes I have—perhaps too hastily—indulged, prove fallacious——"

"They cannot be fallacious, Alizon," interrupted Richard, eagerly. "On that score rest easy. Your connexion with that wretched family is for ever broken. But I can see the necessity of caution, and shall observe it. And so Mistress Nutter takes an interest in you?"

"The strongest," replied Dorothy; "but see! she comes this way."

But we must now go back for a short space.

While Mistress Nutter and Nicholas were seated at a table examining a plan of the Rough Lee estates, the latter was greatly astonished to see the door open and give admittance to Master Potts, who he fancied snugly lying between a couple of blankets at the Dragon. The attorney was clad in a riding-dress, which he had exchanged for his wet habiliments, and was accompanied by Sir Ralph Assheton and Master Roger Nowell. On seeing Nicholas, he instantly stepped up to him.

"Aha! squire," he cried, "you did not expect to see me again so soon, eh? A pottle of hot sack put my blood into circulation, and having luckily a change of raiment in my valise, I am all right again. Not so easily got rid of, you see!"

"So it appears," replied Nicholas, laughing.

"We have a trifling account to settle together, sir," said the attorney, putting on a serious look.

"Whenever you please, sir," replied Nicholas, good-humouredly, tapping the hilt of his sword.

"Not in that way," cried Potts, darting quickly back. "I never fight with those weapons—never. Our dispute must be settled in a court of law, sir—in a court of law. You understand, Master Nicholas?"

"There is a shrewd maxim, Master Potts, that he who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client," observed Nicholas, dryly. "Would it not be better to stick to the defence of others rather than practise in your own behalf?"

"You have expressed my opinion, Master Nicholas," observed Roger Nowell; "and I hope Master Potts will not commence any action on his own account till he has finished my business."

"Assuredly not, sir, since you desire it," replied the attorney, obsequiously. "But my motives must not be mistaken. I have a clear case of assault and battery against Master Nicholas Assheton, or I may proceed against him criminally for an attempt on my life."

"Have you given him no provocation, sir?" demanded Sir Ralph, sternly.

"No provocation can justify the treatment I have experienced, Sir Ralph," replied Potts. "However, to show I am a man of peace, and harbour no resentment, however just grounds I may have for such a feeling, I am willing to make up the matter with Master Nicholas, provided——"

"He offers you a handsome consideration, eh?" said the squire.

"Provided he offers me a handsome apology—such as a gentleman may accept," rejoined Potts, consequentially.

"And which he will not refuse, I am sure," said Sir Ralph, glancing at his cousin.

"I should certainly be sorry to have drowned you," said the squire—"very sorry."

"Enough—enough—I am content," cried Potts, holding out his hand, which Nicholas grasped with an energy that brought tears into the little man's eyes.

"I am glad the matter is amicably adjusted," observed Roger Nowell, "for I suspect both parties have been to blame. And I must now request you, Master Potts, to forego your search and inquiries after witches, till such time as you have settled this question of the boundary line for me. One matter at a time, my good sir."

"But, Master Nowell," cried Potts, "my much esteemed and singular good client——"

"I will have no nay," interrupted Nowell, peremptorily.

"Hum!" muttered Potts; "I shall lose the best chance of distinction ever thrown in my way."

"I care not," said Nowell.

"Just as you came up, Master Nowell," observed Nicholas, "I was

examining a plan of the disputed estates in Pendle Forest. It differs from yours, and, if correct, certainly substantiates Mistress Nutter's claim."

"I have mine with me," replied Nowell, producing a plan, and opening it. "We can compare the two, if you please. The line runs thus:—From the foot of Pendle Hill, beginning with Barley Booth, the boundary is marked by a stone wall, as far as certain fields in the occupation of John Ogden. Is it not so?"

"It is," replied Nicholas, comparing the statement with the other plan.

"It then runs on in a northerly direction," pursued Nowell, "towards Burst Clough, and here the landmarks are certain stones placed in the moor, one hundred yards apart, and giving me twenty acres of this land, and Mistress Nutter ten."

"On the contrary," replied Nicholas. "This plan gives Mistress Nutter twenty acres, and you ten."

"Then the plan is wrong" cried Nowell, sharply.

"It has been carefully prepared," said Mistress Nutter, who had approached the table.

"No matter; it is wrong, I say," cried Nowell, angrily.

"You see where the landmarks are placed, Master Nowell," said Nicholas, pointing to the measurement. "I merely go by them."

"The landmarks are improperly placed in that plan," cried Nowell.

"I will examine them myself to-morrow," said Potts, taking out a large memorandum-book; "there cannot be an error of ten acres—ten perches, or ten feet, possibly, but acres—pshaw?"

"Laugh as you please; but go on," said Mistress Nutter.

"Well, then," pursued Nicholas, "the line approaches the bank of a rivulet called Moss Brook—a rare place for woodcocks and snipes, that Moss Brook, I may remark—the land on the left consisting of five acres of waste land, marked by a sheepfold and two posts set up in a line with it, belonging to Mistress Nutter."

"To Mistress Nutter!" exclaimed Nowell, indignantly. "To me, you mean."

"It is here set down to Mistress Nutter," said Nicholas.

"Then it is set down wrongfully," cried Nowell. "That plan is altogether incorrect."

"On which side of the field does the rivulet flow?" inquired Potts.

"On the right," replied Nicholas.

"On the left," cried Nowell.

"There must be some extraordinary mistake," said Potts. "I shall make a note of that, and examine it to-morrow.—N.B. Waste land—sheepfold—rivulet called Moss Brook flowing on the left."

"On the right," cried Mistress Nutter.

"That remains to be seen," rejoined Potts; "I have made the entry as on the left."

"Go on, Master Nicholas," said Nowell; "I should like to see how many other errors that plan contains."

"Passing the rivulet," pursued the squire, "we come to a footpath leading to the limestone quarry, about which there can be no mistake. Then by Cat Gallows Wood and Swallow Hole; and then by another path to Worston Moor, skirting a hut in the occupation of James Device—ha! ha! Master Jem, are you here? I thought you dwelt with your

grandmother at Malkin Tower—excuse me, Master Nowell, but one must relieve the dulness of this plan by an exclamation or so—and here being waste land again, the landmarks are certain stones set at intervals towards Hook Cliff, and giving Mistress Nutter two-thirds of the whole moor, and Master Roger Nowell one-third."

"False again," cried Nowell, furiously. "The two-thirds are mine, the one-third Mistress Nutter's."

"Somebody must be very wrong," cried Nicholas.

"Very wrong indeed," added Potts; "and I suspect that that somebody is——"

"Master Nowell," said Mistress Nutter.

"Mistress Nutter," cried Master Nowell.

"Both are wrong and both right, according to your own showing," said Nicholas, laughing.

"To-morrow will decide the question," said Potts.

"Better wait till then," interposed Sir Ralph. "Take both plans with you, and you will then ascertain which is correct."

"Agreed," cried Nowell. "Here is mine."

"And here is mine," said Mistress Nutter. "I will abide by the investigation."

"And Master Potts and I will verify the statements," said Nicholas.

"We will, sir," replied the attorney, putting his memorandum-book in his pocket. "We will."

The plans were then delivered to the custody of Sir Ralph, who promised to hand them over to Potts and Nicholas on the morrow.

The party then separated; Mistress Nutter shaping her course towards the window where Alizon and the two other young people were seated, while Potts, plucking the squire's sleeve, said, with a very mysterious look, that he desired a word with him in private. Wondering what could be the nature of the communication the attorney desired to make, Nicholas withdrew with him into a corner, and Nowell, who saw them retire, and could not help watching them with some curiosity, remarked that the squire's hilarious countenance fell as he listened to the attorney, while, on the contrary, the features of the latter gleamed with malicious satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Mistress Nutter approached Alizon, and beckoning her towards her, they quitted the room together. As the young girl went forth, she cast a wistful look at Dorothy and her brother.

"You think with me, that that lovely girl is well born?" said Dorothy, as Alizon disappeared.

"It were heresy to doubt it," answered Richard.

"Shall I tell you another secret?" she continued, regarding him fixedly—"if, indeed, it be a secret, for you must be sadly wanting in discernment if you have not found it out ere this. She loves you."

"Dorothy!" exclaimed Richard.

"I am sure of it," she rejoined. "But I would not tell you this, if I were not quite equally sure that you love her in return."

"On my faith, Dorothy, you give yourself credit for wonderful penetration," cried Richard.

"Not a whit more than I am entitled to," she answered. "Nay, it will not do to attempt concealment with me. If I had not been certain of the matter before, your manner now would convince me. I am very

glad of it. She will make a charming sister, and I shall be very fond of her."

"How you do run on, madcap!" cried her brother, trying to look displeased, but totally failing in assuming the expression.

"Stranger things have come to pass," said Dorothy; "and one reads in story-books of young nobles marrying village maidens in spite of parental opposition. I dare say you will get nobody's consent to the marriage but mine, Richard."

"I dare say not," he replied, rather blankly.

"That is, if she should not turn out to be somebody's daughter," pursued Dorothy; "somebody, I mean, quite as great as the heir of Middleton, which I make no doubt she will."

"I hope she may," replied Richard.

"Why, you don't mean to say you wouldn't marry her if she didn't!" cried Dorothy. "I'm ashamed of you, Richard."

"It would remove all opposition, at all events," said her brother.

"So it would," said Dorothy. "And now I'll tell you another notion of mine, Richard. Somehow or other, it has come into my head, that Alizon is the daughter of—whom do you think?"

"Whom!" he cried.

"Guess," she rejoined.

"I can't," he exclaimed, impatiently.

"Well, then, I'll tell you without more ado," she answered. "Mind, it's only my notion, and I've no precise grounds for it. But, in my opinion, she's the daughter of the lady who has just left the room."

"Of Mistress Nutter!" ejaculated Richard, starting. "What makes you think so?"

"The extraordinary and otherwise unaccountable interest she takes in her," replied Dorothy. "And, if you recollect, Mistress Nutter had an infant daughter, who was lost in a strange manner."

"I thought the child died," replied Richard; "but it may be as you say. I hope it is so."

"Time will show," said Dorothy; "but I have made up my mind about the matter."

At this moment Nicholas Assheton came up to them, looking grave and uneasy.

"What has happened?" asked Richard, anxiously.

"I have just received some very unpleasant intelligence," replied Nicholas. "I told you of a menace uttered by that confounded Potts on quitting me after his ducking. He has now spoken out plainly, and declares he overheard part of a conversation between Mistress Nutter and Elizabeth Device, which took place in the ruins of the convent church this morning, and he is satisfied that——"

"Well!" cried Richard, breathlessly.

"That Mistress Nutter is a witch, and in league with witches," continued Nicholas.

"Ha!" exclaimed Richard, turning deathly pale.

"I suspect the rascal has invented the charge," said Nicholas; "but he is quite unscrupulous enough to make it; and, if made, it will be fatal to our relative's reputation, if not to her life."

"It is false, I am sure of it," cried Richard, torn by conflicting emotions.

"Would I could think so!" cried Dorothy, suddenly recollecting Mistress Nutter's strange demeanour in the little chapel, and the unaccountable influence she seemed to exercise over the old crone. "But something has occurred to-day that leads me to a contrary conviction."

"What is it? Speak!" cried Richard.

"Not now—not now," replied Dorothy.

"Whatever suspicions you may entertain, keep silence, or you will destroy Mistress Nutter," said Nicholas.

"Fear me not," rejoined Dorothy. "Oh, Alizon!" she murmured, "that this unhappy question should arise at such a moment."

"Do you indeed believe the charge, Dorothy?" asked Richard, in a low voice.

"I do," she answered in the same tone. "If Alizon be her daughter, she can never be your wife."

"How?" cried Richard.

"Never—never," repeated Dorothy, emphatically. "The daughter of a witch, be that witch named Elizabeth Device or Alice Nutter, is no mate for you."

"You prejudge Mistress Nutter, Dorothy," he cried.

"Alas, Richard, I have too good reason for what I say," she answered, sadly.

Richard uttered an exclamation of despair. And on the instant the lively sounds of tabor and pipe, mixed with the jingling of bells, arose from the court-yard, and presently afterwards an attendant entered to announce that the May-day revellers were without, and directions were given by Sir Ralph that they should be shown into the great banqueting-hall below the gallery, which had been prepared for their reception.

Chapter IX.

THE REVELATION.

On quitting the long gallery, Mistress Nutter and Alizon ascended a wide staircase, and traversing a corridor came to an antique, tapestried chamber, richly but cumbrously furnished, having a carved oak bedstead, with sombre hangings, a few high-backed chairs of the same material, and a massive wardrobe, with shrine-work atop, and two finely sculptured figures, of the size of life, in the habits of Cistercian monks, placed as supporters at either extremity. At one side of the bed the tapestry was drawn aside, showing the entrance to a closet or inner room, and opposite it there was a great yawning fireplace, with a lofty mantelpiece and chimney projecting beyond the walls. The windows were narrow and darkened by heavy transom bars and small diamond panes, while the view without, looking upon Whalley Nab, was obstructed by the contiguity of a tall cypress, whose funereal branches added to the general gloom. The room was one of those formerly allotted to their guests by the hospitable abbots, and had undergone little change since their time, except in regard to furniture; and even that appeared old and faded now. What with the gloomy arras, the shrouded bedstead, and the Gothic wardrobe with its mysterious figures, the chamber had a grim, ghostly air, and so the young girl thought on entering it.

"I have brought you hither, Alizon," said Mistress Nutter, motioning her to a seat, "that we may converse without chance of interruption, for I have much to say. On first seeing you to-day, your appearance, so superior to the rest of the May-day mummers, struck me forcibly, and I resolved to question Elizabeth Device about you. Accordingly, I bade her join me in the abbey gardens. She did so, and had not long left me when I accidently met you and the others in the Lacy Chapel. When questioned, Elizabeth affected great surprise, and denied positively that there was any foundation for the idea that you were other than her child; but, notwithstanding her asseverations, I could see from her confused manner that there was more in the notion than she chose to admit, and I determined to have recourse to other means of arriving at the truth, little expecting my suspicions would be so soon confirmed by Mother Chattox. To my interrogation of that old woman you were yourself a party, and I am now rejoiced that you interfered to prevent me from prosecuting my inquiries to the utmost. There was one present from whom the secret of your birth must be strictly kept—at least, for awhile—and my impatience carried me too far."

"I only obeyed a natural impulse, madam," said Alizon; "but I am at a loss to conceive what claim I can possibly have to the consideration you show me?"

"Listen to me, and you shall learn," replied Mistress Nutter. "It is a sad tale, and its recital will tear open old wounds, but it must not be withheld on that account. I do not ask you to bury the secrets I am about to impart in the recesses of your bosom. You will do so when you learn them without my telling you. When little more than your age I was wedded; but not to him I would have chosen, if choice had been permitted me. The union, I need scarcely say, was unhappy—most unhappy—though my discomforts were scrupulously concealed, and I was looked upon as a devoted wife, and my husband as a model of conjugal affection. But this was merely the surface—internally all was strife and misery. Ere long my dislike of my husband increased to absolute hate, while on his part, though he still regarded me with as much passion as heretofore, he became frantically jealous—and above all, of Edward Braddyll, of Portfield, who, as his bosom friend and my distant relative, was a frequent visitor at the house. To relate the numerous exhibitions of jealousy that occurred would answer little purpose, and it will be enough to say that not a word or look passed between Edward and myself but was misconstrued. I took care never to be alone with our guest, nor to give any just ground for suspicion—but my caution availed nothing. An easy remedy would have been to forbid Edward the house, but this my husband's pride rejected. He preferred to endure the jealous torment occasioned by the presence of his wife's fancied lover, and inflict needless anguish on her rather than brook the jeers of a few indifferent acquaintances. The same feeling made him desire to keep up an apparent good understanding with me; and so far I seconded his views, for I shared in his pride, if in nothing else. Our quarrels were all in private, when no eye could see us—no ear listen."

"Yours is a melancholy history, madam," remarked Alizon, in a tone of profound interest.

"You will think so ere I have done," returned the lady, sadly. "The

only person in my confidence, and aware of my secret sorrows, was Elizabeth Device, who with her husband, John Device, then lived at Rough Lee. Serving me in the quality of tire-woman and personal attendant, she could not be kept in ignorance of what took place, and the poor soul offered me all the sympathy in her power. Much was it needed, for I had no other sympathy. After awhile, I know not from what cause, unless from some imprudence on the part of Edward Braddyll, who was wild and reckless, my husband conceived worse suspicions than ever of me, and began to treat me with such harshness and cruelty, that, unable longer to endure his violence, I appealed to my father. But he was of a stern and arbitrary nature, and having forced me into the match, would not listen to my complaints, but bade me submit. 'It was my duty to do so,' he said; and he added some cutting expressions to the effect that I deserved the treatment I experienced, and dismissed me. Driven to desperation, I sought counsel and assistance from one I should most have avoided—from Edward Braddyll—and he proposed flight from my husband's roof—flight with him."

"But you were saved, madam?" cried Alizon, greatly shocked by the narration. "You were saved?"

"Hear me out," rejoined Mistress Nutter. "Outraged as my feelings were, and loathsome as my husband was to me, I spurned the base proposal, and instantly quitted my false friend. Nor would I have seen him more, if permitted; but that secret interview with him was my first and last;—for it had been witnessed by my husband."

"Ha!" exclaimed Alizon.

"Concealed behind the arras, Richard Nutter heard enough to confirm his worst suspicions," pursued the lady, "but he did not hear my justification. He saw Edward Braddyll at my feet—he heard him urge me to fly—but he did not wait to learn if I consented, and looking upon me as guilty, left his hiding-place, to take measures for frustrating the plan he supposed concerted between us. That night I was made prisoner in my room, and endured treatment the most inhuman. But a proposal was made by my husband that promised some alleviation of my suffering. Henceforth we were to meet only in public, when a semblance of affection was to be maintained on both sides. This was done, he said, to save my character, and preserve his own name unspotted in the eyes of others, however tarnished it might be in his own. I willingly consented to the arrangement; and thus, for a brief space, I became tranquil, if not happy. But another and severer trial awaited me."

"Alas, madam!" exclaimed Alizon, sympathisingly.

"My cup of sorrow, I thought, was full," pursued Mistress Nutter, "but the drop was wanting to make it overflow. It came soon enough. Amidst my griefs I expected to be a mother, and with that thought how many fond and cheering anticipations mingled! In my child I hoped to find a balm for my woes: in its smiles and innocent endearments a compensation for the harshness and injustice I had experienced. How little did I foresee that it was to be a new instrument of torture to me; and that I should be cruelly robbed of the only blessing ever vouchsafed me!"

"Did the child die, madam?" asked Alizon.

"You shall hear," replied Mistress Nutter. "A daughter was born to me. I was made happy by its birth. A new existence, bright and unclouded, seemed dawning upon me; but it was like a sunburst on a

stormy day. Some two months before this event, Elizabeth Device had given birth to a daughter, and she now took my child under her fostering care, for weakness prevented me from affording it the support it is a mother's blessed privilege to bestow. She seemed as fond of it as myself; and never was babe more calculated to win love than my little Millicent. Oh! how shall I go on! The retrospect I am compelled to take is frightful, but I cannot shun it. The foul and false suspicions entertained by my husband began to settle on the child. He would not believe it to be his own. With violent oaths and threats he first announced his odious suspicions to Elizabeth Device, and she, full of terror, communicated them to me. The tidings filled me with inexpressible alarm, for I knew if the dread idea had once taken possession of him it would never be removed, while what he threatened would be executed. I would have fled at once with my poor babe if I had known where to go; but I had no place of shelter. It would be in vain to seek refuge with my father; and I had no other relative or friend whom I could trust. Where then should I fly? At last I bethought me of a retreat, and arranged a plan of escape with Elizabeth Device. Vain were my precautions. On that very night I was startled from slumber by a sudden cry from the nurse, who was seated by the fire, with the child on her knees. It was long past midnight, and all the household were at rest. Two persons had entered the room. One was my ruthless husband, Richard Nutter; the other was John Device, a powerful, ruffianly fellow, who planted himself near the door.

"Marching quickly towards Elizabeth, who had arisen on seeing him, my husband snatched the child from her before I could seize it, and with a violent blow on the chest felled me to the ground, where I lay helpless—speechless. With reeling senses I heard Elizabeth cry out that it was her own child, and call upon her husband to save it. Richard Nutter paused, but, re-assured by a laugh of disbelief from his ruffianly follower, he told Elizabeth the pitiful excuse would not avail to save the brat. And then I saw a weapon gleam—there was a feeble, piteous cry—a cry that might have moved a demon—but it did not move *him*. With wicked words and blood-imbrued hands he cast the body on the fire. The horrid sight was too much for me, and I became senseless."

"A dreadful tale, indeed, madam," cried Alizon, frozen with horror.

"The crime was hidden—hidden from the eyes of men—but mark the retribution that followed," said Mistress Nutter, her eyes sparkling with vindictive joy. "Both the murderers perished miserably. John Device was drowned in a moss pool. Richard Nutter's end was terrible, sharpened by the pangs of remorse, and marked by frightful suffering. But another dark event preceded his death, which may have laid a crime the more on his already heavily-burdened soul. Edward Braddyll, the object of his jealousy and hate, suddenly sickened of a malady so strange and fearful that all who saw him affirmed it the result of witchcraft. None thought of my husband's agency in the dark affair except myself, but knowing he had held many secret conferences about the time with Mother Chattox, I more than suspected him. The sick man died. And from that hour Richard Nutter knew no rest. Ever on horseback, or fiercely carousing, he sought in vain to stifle remorse. Visions scared him by night, and vague fears pursued him by day. He would start at shadows, and talk wildly. To me his whole demeanour was altered; and

he strove by every means in his power to win my love. But he could not give me back the treasure he had taken. He could not bring to life my murdered babe. Like his victim, he fell ill on a sudden, and of a strange and terrible sickness. I saw he could not recover, and therefore tended him carefully. He died; and I shed no tear."

"Alas!" exclaimed Alizon, "though guilty, I cannot but compassionate him."

"You are right to do so, Alizon," said Mistress Nutter, rising, while the young girl rose too, "for he was your father."

"My father!" she exclaimed, in amazement. "Then you are my mother?"

"I am—I am," replied Mistress Nutter, straining her to her bosom. "Oh, my child!—my dear child!" she cried. "The voice of nature from the first pleaded eloquently in your behalf, and I should have been deaf to all impulses of affection if I had not listened to the call. I now trace in every feature the lineaments of the babe I thought lost for ever. All is clear to me. The exclamation of Elizabeth Device, which, like my ruthless husband, I looked upon as an artifice to save the infant's life, I now find to be the truth. Her child perished instead of mine. How or why she exchanged the infants on that night remains to be explained, but that she did so is certain; while that she should afterwards conceal the circumstance is easily comprehended, from a natural dread of her own husband as well as of mine. It is possible, from some cause, she may still deny the truth, but I can make it her interest to speak plainly. The main difficulty will lie in my public acknowledgment of you. But at whatever cost, it shall be made."

"Oh! consider it well," said Alizon. "I will be your daughter in love—in duty—in all but name. But sully not my poor father's honour, which even at the peril of his soul he sought to maintain! How can I be owned as your daughter without involving the discovery of this tragic history?"

"You are right, Alizon," rejoined Mistress Nutter, thoughtfully. "It will bring the dark deed to light. But you shall never return to Elizabeth Device. You shall go with me to Rough Lee, and take up your abode in the house where I was once so wretched, but where I shall now be full of happiness with you. You shall see the dark spots on the hearth which I took to be your blood."

"If not mine, it was blood spilt by my father," said Alizon, with a shudder.

Was it fancy, or did a low groan break upon her ear? It must be imaginary, for Mistress Nutter seemed unconscious of the dismal sound. It was now growing rapidly dark, and the more distant objects in the room were wrapped in obscurity; but Alizon's gaze rested on the two monkish figures supporting the wardrobe.

"Look there, mother," she said to Mistress Nutter.

"Where?" cried the lady, turning round quickly. "Ah! I see. You alarm yourself needlessly, my child. Those are only carved figures of two brethren of the abbey. They are said—I know not with what truth—to be statues of John Paslew and Borlace Alvetham."

"I thought they stirred," said Alizon.

"It was mere fancy," replied Mistress Nutter. "Calm yourself, sweet child. Let us think of other things—of our newly-discovered relation-

ship. Henceforth, to me you are Millicent Nutter; though to others you must still be Alizon Device. My sweet Millicent," she cried, embracing her again and again, "ah, little, little did I think to see you more!"

Alizon's fears were speedily chased away.

"Forgive me, dear mother," she cried, "if I have failed to express the full delight I experience in my restitution to you. The shock of your sad tale at first deadened my joy, while the suddenness of the information respecting myself so overwhelmed me, that, like one chancing upon a hidden treasure, and gazing at it confounded, I was unable to credit my own good fortune. Even now I am quite bewildered; and no wonder, for many thoughts, each of different import, throng upon me. Independently of the pleasure and natural pride I must feel in being acknowledged by you as a daughter, it is a source of the deepest satisfaction to me to know that I am not, in any way, connected with Elizabeth Device; not from her humble station—for poverty weighs little with me in comparison with virtue and goodness—but from her sinfulness. You know the dark offence laid to her charge?"

"I do," replied Mistress Nutter, in a low deep tone; "but I do not believe it."

"Nor I," returned Alizon. "Still she acts as if she were the wicked thing she is called; avoids all religious offices; shuns all places of worship; and derides the Holy Scriptures. Oh! mother, you will comprehend the frequent conflict of feelings I must have endured. You will understand my horror when I have sometimes thought myself the daughter of a witch."

"Why did you not leave her if you thought so?" said Mistress Nutter, frowning.

"I could not leave her," replied Alizon, "for I then thought her my mother."

Mistress Nutter fell upon her daughter's neck, and wept aloud.

"You have an excellent heart, my child," she said, at length, checking her emotion.

"I have nothing to complain of in Elizabeth Device, dear mother," she replied. "What she denied herself, she did not refuse me; and though I have necessarily many and great deficiencies, you will find in me, I trust, no evil principles. And, oh! shall we not strive to rescue that poor benighted creature from the pit? We may yet save her."

"It is too late," replied Mrs. Nutter, in a sombre tone.

"It cannot be too late," said Alizon, confidently. "She cannot be beyond redemption. But even if she should prove intractable, poor little Jennet may be preserved. She is yet a child, with some good—though, alas! much evil, also, in her nature. Let our united efforts be exerted in this good work, and we must succeed. The weeds extirpated, the flowers will spring up freely, and bloom in beauty."

"I can have nothing to do with her," said Mistress Nutter, in a freezing tone; "nor must you."

"Oh! say not so, mother," cried Alizon. "You rob me of half the happiness I feel in being restored to you. When I was Jennet's sister, I devoted myself to the task of reclaiming her. I hoped to be her guardian angel—to step between her and the assaults of evil—and I cannot,

will not, now abandon her. If no longer my sister, she is still dear to me. And recollect that I owe a deep debt of gratitude to her mother—a debt I can never pay."

"How so?" cried Mistress Nutter. "You owe her nothing—but the contrary."

"I owe her a life," said Alizon. "Was not her infant's blood poured out for mine! And shall I not save the child left her, if I can?"

"I shall not oppose your inclinations," replied Mistress Nutter, with reluctant assent; "but Elizabeth, I suspect, will thank you little for your interference."

"Not now, perhaps," returned Alizon; "but a time will come when she will do so."

While this conversation took place, it had been rapidly growing dark, and the gloom, at length increased so much, that the speakers could scarcely see each other's faces. The sudden and portentous darkness was accounted for by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a low growl of thunder, rumbling over Whalley Nab. The mother and daughter drew close together, and Mistress Nutter passed her arm round Alizon's neck.

The storm came quickly on, with forked and dangerous lightning, and loud claps of thunder threatening mischief. Presently, all its fury seemed collected over the abbey. The red flashes hissed, and the peals of thunder rolled over head. But other terrors were added to Alizon's natural dread of the elemental warfare. Again she fancied the two monkish figures, which had before excited her alarm, moved, and even shook their arms menacingly at her. At first she attributed this wild idea to her overwrought imagination, and strove to convince herself of its fallacy by keeping her eyes steadily fixed upon them. But each succeeding flash only served to confirm her superstitious apprehensions.

Another circumstance contributed to heighten her alarm. Scared most probably by the storm, a large white owl fluttered down the chimney, and after wheeling twice or thrice round the chamber, settled upon the bed, hooting, puffing, ruffling its feathers, and glaring at her with eyes that glowed like fiery coals.

Mistress Nutter seemed little moved by the storm, though she kept a profound silence, but when Alizon gazed in her face she was frightened by its expression, which reminded her of the terrible aspect she had worn at the interview with Mother Chattox.

All at once Mistress Nutter arose, and, rapid as the lightning playing around her and revealing her movements, made several passes, with extended hands, over her daughter; and on this the latter instantly fell back, as if fainting, though still retaining her consciousness, and, what was stranger still, though her eyes were closed, her power of sight remained.

In this condition she fancied invisible forms were moving about her. Strange sounds seemed to salute her ears, like the gibbering of ghosts, and she thought she felt the flapping of unseen wings around her.

All at once her attention was drawn—she knew not why—towards the closet, and from out it she fancied she saw issue the tall dark figure of a man. She was sure she saw him, for her imagination could not body forth features charged with such a fiendish expression, or eyes of such unearthly

lustre. He was clothed in black, but the fashion of his raiments was unlike aught she had ever seen. His stature was gigantic, and a pale phosphoric light enshrouded him. As he advanced forked lightnings shot into the room, and the thunder split overhead. The owl hooted fearfully, quitted its perch, and flew off by the way it had entered the chamber.

The Dark Shape came on. It stood beside Mistress Nutter, and she prostrated herself before it. The gestures of the figure were angry and imperious—those of Mistress Nutter supplicating. Their converse was drowned by the rattling of the storm. At last the figure pointed to Alizon, and the word "Midnight" broke in tones louder than the thunder from its lips. All consciousness then forsook her.

How long she continued in this state she knew not, but the touch of a finger applied to her brow seemed to recal her suddenly to animation. She heaved a deep sigh, and looked around. A wondrous change had occurred. The storm had passed off, and the moon was shining brightly over the top of the cypress tree, flooding the chamber with its gentle radiance, while her mother was bending over her with looks of tenderest affection.

"You are better now, sweet child," said Mistress Nutter. "You were overcome by the storm. It was sudden and terrible."

"Terrible indeed!" replied Alizon, imperfectly recalling what had passed. "But it was not alone the storm that frightened me. This chamber has been invaded by evil beings. Methought I beheld a dark figure come from out yon closet, and stand before you?"

"You have been thrown into a state of stupor by the influence of the electric fluid," replied Mistress Nutter, "and while in that condition visions have passed through your brain. That is all, my child."

"Oh! I hope so," said Alizon.

"Such ecstasies are of frequent occurrence," replied Mistress Nutter. "But since you are quite recovered, we will descend to Lady Assheton, who may wonder at our absence. You will share this room with me to-night, my child, for as I have already said, you cannot return to Elizabeth Device. I will make all needful explanations to Lady Assheton, and will see Elizabeth in the morning—perhaps, to-night. Re-assure yourself, sweet child. There is nothing to fear."

"I trust not, mother," replied Alizon. "But it would ease my mind to look into that closet."

"Do so, then, by all means," replied Mistress Nutter, with a forced smile.

Alizon peeped timorously into the little room, which was lighted up by the moon's rays. There was a faded white habit like the robe of a Cistercian monk hanging in one corner, and beneath it an old chest. Alizon would fain have opened the chest, but Mistress Nutter called out to her impatiently, "You will discover nothing, I am sure. Come, let us go down stairs."

And they quitted the room together.

MY STRANGE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

BEING THE NINTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

> Now the distemper'd mind
> Has lost that concord of harmonious powers
> Which forms the soul of happiness; and all
> Is off the poise within: the passions all
> Have burst their bounds; and reason, half extinct
> Or impotent, or else approving, sees
> The foul disorder. Senseless and deform'd,
> Convulsive anger storms at large; or, pale
> And silent, settles into fell revenge.
>
> Thomson.

He who is much of a traveller, whether he be given to observe or not, can scarcely fail to be struck with the great contrast of manners, as well as the wonderful variety presented in the countenances of the different members of the genus homo with whom he comes in contact—the taciturn and talkative, the civil and the surly, the merry and the morose. Extremes in all things are, indeed, undesirable. Who has not suffered the infliction of being bored by a determined talker, whom the responses of monosyllables alone would not stop in his prosings on the, perhaps, not more important and interesting subject than that of cooking a cauliflower or planting a cabbage? Who, on the other hand, has not been foiled in attempting to draw on a conversation with the view of whiling away the tediousness of a long coach journey, by the gruff, half-muttered reply of some sleepy insider, or by one who, squeezing himself up into the opposite corner, would at intervals direct his cold grey eye at you from under the huge brim of his beaver, as though he regarded your overture to chat with suspicion? in all probability debating within himself whether you were a gentleman out of luck, or one of the aristocracy of the light-fingered tribe, who pass through those colleges of Art wherein is taught the arcanum of lightening pockets—a science in itself.

Travelling, even to a proverb, brings a man curious companions, throwing utter strangers together, from which often springs the closest intimacies—I say brings, but more correctly should have written did bring—for, amongst its many innovations, steam has all but done away with long journeys and journeying acquaintances. He who travels the longest line by rail need scarcely trouble himself to invite conversation with his neighbour, for he is either too much engrossed in consulting his dial, and comparing the speed at which he is progressing with that of the Chowbent and Bullock Smithy, or some other line, or continually popping his frontispiece out of the window as he nears his destined station, in all probability grumbling that they are no less than a minute and a half behind their time.

Nay, should he with you be going the whole length, against you have ascertained that important fact, and as a preliminary to further edifying conclusions, have both agreed that yesterday was finer than to-day; that the wind blew chilly, very chilly, the day before; and that the late rain

has done much good; screech! goes the steam, like a devil escaping from bondage, the doors fly open in a somewhat similar style to those of the rock to Haji Baba, your luggage comes flying from the top of the carriage before you have yourself well alighted—when, turning to bid good-by to your late companion, you find he has vanished like a harlequin, and, following the general example, you rush about for omnibus or cab as though escaping from the plague, or about to catch some vessel about to start on a voyage from this sublunary sphere to regions of eternal bliss. Hurry, hurry and dash, from the commencement to the end of the journey, wherein the loss of a minute is regarded almost as heinous as pocket-picking, whilst to one-half of the journeyers it is only changing places from forming a part in the dull routine and uneventful commonalties of every-day life, in which not minutes, but days and years are wasted, as though old Time had emigrated from the earth, and King Death, wearied of conquest and slaughter, would slay no more.

Yea, verily, the old system has passed away, and we chat with our fellow-passengers as of old no more; and yet, although we fly on the wings of steam, who will assert that monotonous is the flight? Let such an one, at the same time, confess that he has neither imagination in his brain, nor music in his soul, else, how can he look on the grassy embankment by which he skims along, and behold not a myriad glossy cords fleeting past, in which the buttercup, the daisy, and the green blade, uniting their beauteous hues, are vibrating in dazzling lustre, appearing like the strings of some mighty instrument—or yet not conceive a melody in the voice of the machinery of the monster which speeds him along, and readily adopt its mellifluous notes to Com' E Gentil, or Fake Away?

We are all united in the opinion that steam is indeed mighty steam, and a great feature in the march of improvement; yet there are many who, with me, will often with regret recal the dashing four-in-hand, the road-side house, the guard's "All right," the coachman's "Let them go," and the country—the landscapes—the moving panoramas by which we took our devious way. Farewell to thee, honest jarvey, and the team, the pride of thy heart; no more shall we hear the pedigree of the black wheeler, or the eventful history of the off bay leader, and the plates he was wont to win.

Coach travelling, I repeat, not unfrequently brought amusing companionship, and sometimes originated lasting friendships; amongst the latter, one that I most highly prized, originated in a conversation resulting from my consulting the wishes of a fellow insider respecting the up or down of the windows, our destination being the same, and our journey together of some four hours' duration on a winter's day.

The acquaintance, however, of one of the strangest beings I ever met, and to whom I am about to introduce the reader, arose not from our journeying together, but, being an incident of travel, I relate it—for singular was the commencement of our acquaintance, and singular the place of our meeting—and that was the Devil's Bridge, in Wales.

Far be it from me to attempt a description of a place so celebrated, and made so well known by the author and the artist, and so wonderful in its grandeur, as to rival ought that ever famed Switzerland can boast. Of it I will venture to say no more than this, that it is one of those places which, once to look upon, is never to forget—a scene whose wild and romantic beauty seems to leave a spell upon the spirit, and when far away haunts one in dreams.

On my visit to the place, it so chanced that, the moment I sought the guide, a gentleman, whom I had noticed on my arrival alighting from a postchaise, and who in all probability, like myself, since his arrival had been partaking of some refreshment in the hotel, required the attendance of that very useful appendage on an expedition to the waterfall—a conductor.

The guide, as is his wont when more than one person requires his attendance, made the inquiry if it would be agreeable for us together to accompany him, which meeting with an assent from both, we descended the steps immediately fronting the hotel, commencing the series of views with a fall of the torrent, whilst standing in the robbers' cave, of which the guide tells a legend. Should there not be a scarcity of the liquid element, the water bounds over the spectator's head from the rock above, forming a beautiful veil before you, or, in the words of the guide, appearing like a sheet of glass.

So much was my attention absorbed by the extraordinary formation of the rocks around me, that for some time I had scarcely noticed the stranger at my side; and it was not until we had gained the lowest depth of the gorge, that, in turning to avail myself of a seat commanding a full view of the fall, my attention was arrested by his countenance, which indicated great emotion, as he gazed on the vortex of waters which was boiling at our feet.

From the first moment of my seeing him I had judged him to be an invalid. A closer observation revealed lines of deep suffering, not to be mistaken, in his pallid countenance, and a feebleness in his gait which implied recent illness. Age it could not be, for he was evidently not more than thirty, although his attenuated figure, combined with a number of grey hairs, which showed amongst his black locks, would have led a casual observer to pronounce his sojourn on earth to have been nearer forty years.

I remember that we entered into conversation through his taking a part in some remarks which I made to the guide in reference to the inscriptions of visitors' names on the rocks around us, the stranger pointing out one of these to my notice, which had been cut in the stone with not a little labour, and which he observed had struck him on his last visit to the place as one of the most uncommon and uncouth names he had ever met with. It was this remark on the singular patronymic carved before us, that commenced an animated conversation between us, which terminated not until long after we had completed the series of views, which terminate at the base of that singular perpendicular division of rock, through whose rent base the boiling torrent tumultuously rushes, and whose high crests are spanned by that extraordinary combination of stones and human skill, known as the "Devil's Bridge." Here, after having delayed my departure some two hours later than I had originally intended, I left the stranger, the day being far advanced, and soon after sunset I arrived at that paragon of hotels, the Belle Vue, at Aberystwith.

During my drive, the manner, appearance, and conversation of my late singular companion occupied much of my thoughts. That he was one accustomed to move in the upper ranks of society I felt assured, from his bearing as well as the highly-cultivated mind revealed in his remarks on the various subjects on which we had conversed. The disposition he had

evinced to enter into conversation and to continue with me throughout the afternoon, would naturally cause me to feel some amount of interest in him; but the incident attendant upon our afternoon's ramble, which I will now relate, excited also on my part very considerable curiosity respecting him.

I have already stated that I had noticed the working of his countenance, indicative of strong emotion; I was also struck with the settled gloom which shadowed his brow; and also, as more unreserved became our conversation, the bitterness which seemed, spite of himself, to pervade his remarks whenever the theme touched upon our fellow kind.

It was some time after we had dismissed the guide, and whilst reclining on the moss-covered rock, taking a last view of the waterfall, that the circumstance occurred which was the subject of my cogitation and curiosity for long after we had parted. Whilst enjoying the beauteous scene spread before us, the sun, which for some time had been screened by a bank of clouds, burst suddenly over the vapoury boundary, like a stroke of magic, lighting up rock, wood, and waterfall, with its glorious effulgence. The effect was sublime; and at the moment occurred to me a part of one of Bishop's gems, and I began involuntarily to give forth—

> Till the sunbeam's genial ray
> Chase, &c., &c., &c.

Had I not, in the sudden exhilarating effect produced by the bursting flood of sunshine, forgotten that the stranger sat beside me, I should have hesitated in giving, unasked for, a specimen of my vocal powers, mine being very far from notes mellifluous. I was repeating the strain, when a kind of half-stifled groan from my companion recalled me to a knowledge of his presence. Turning round, to my great astonishment, I beheld him lying flat upon the earth, his face buried in his hands, and evidently suffering from bodily pain or deep mental anguish. Conjecturing that he had been taken suddenly ill, I placed my hand on his shoulder, and inquired if I could render any assistance. He sprang to his feet at the moment, and never shall I forget the expression of the features which met my gaze.

Grief, intense passion—nay, frantic madness—spoke in his flashing eye; his hitherto pallid countenance was flushed; and contortions of the most fearful kind played around his mouth, whilst his hands still clenched fragments of moss, which he had grasped in his anguish from the rock.

I shuddered, for he appeared, with his dilated eyes, to be gazing upon something against which he was uttering denunciations which I will not repeat; and cold ran my blood when I beheld, whilst imprecations were on his lips, his clenched hands raised up against the blue vault of heaven; and then, exhausted with his raving, he sank to the earth, gasping for breath, and helpless as a child.

I did not speak, but stood beside him lost in amazement, hesitating whether to hasten to the inn for assistance, or to wait and watch his recovery. I had come to the determination of adopting the former plan of proceeding, when he, with some difficulty, rose to a sitting posture, and began to look wildly around him, as though awakening from a dream.

A pang of pity shot through my heart as he turned to address me

whilst endeavouring to raise a smile on his countenance, which bore traces of the anguish he had endured in the paroxysm I had witnessed.

"I am very faint," he commenced, in a voice scarcely articulate, "and in pain, but shall soon recover; these attacks—these fits, I suffer from at times; you perceive that I am indeed an invalid." He paused: I did not speak, but gazed at him with feelings of blended sorrow and astonishment. Perceiving me silent, he continued: "'Tis dreadful to be so afflicted; my nervous system is deranged. The fits are very exhausting, but I feel better now. Thank you—thank you; you are very kind."

By this time, with my assistance, he had risen to his feet, and, after I had expressed my commiseration for his sufferings, he requested permission to lean on my arm, and we slowly quitted the place. He had soon regained his composure; indeed, was so far recovered, that we strolled on to view the bridge again. And here I parted with my singular companion, he never once alluding, in the conversation which ensued, to the frantic and fearful outbreak which I had so recently witnessed.

Well might I cogitate, in my drive from the "Devil's Bridge" that evening, on the singular occurrence which I have related, and feel convinced there was something more than physical suffering that produced the ravings of the stranger. Little did I think at the time that it was destined we were soon to meet again.

There are few finer prospects afforded by our watering-places than is presented at Aberystwith. Standing on Constitution-hill, you embrace at one view the town, with its handsome uniform parade facing the sea, the ruins of the castle, the huge rocks basing the ruins, against which the tireless waves lash themselves, and at times send high into air the fantastic play of their foam; and, not the least important feature in the scene, the bold sweeping coast, and on the wide spread of ocean, here and there the sail of an outward-bound crossing the bar.

Aberystwith possesses many solid attractions for the invalid; there is, perhaps, not another watering-place in the kingdom the air of which produces so rapid an effect on the appetite and upon the spirits; and yet it must be confessed that it is anything but a place of animation. To one visiting it without a party of friends, it would be found almost insufferably dull, much depending, of course, on the resources of the individual's mind; but most of those who singly sojourn in watering-places where there are no amusements in the town, and little or no fraternising amongst the visitors, find themselves soon in a migratory mood. Wonderful, beautiful, and harmonious at first, but dreadfully monotonous very soon becomes the rush of waters on the beach; and speculations as to the probable reach of the next-coming wave as the incoming tide nears its boundary, soon cease to interest.

The *solitaire* at Aberystwith might certainly amuse himself by sauntering over the pebbly beach, and find rich food for the mind in contemplating the curiously-marked stones and shells which are to be found by persevering searchers, or matter to moralise upon in bits of wood or bone thrown up by the restless world of waters. Nay, there is yet another resource—to say nought of the subscription library, well stored with sentimental lore—the castle-walk, so delightfully situated, with its numerous seats to accommodate the promenaders. Here, he may study character in the number of Wilhelminas and Seraphinas, who, with book in hand, seem absorbed in the perusal of the soul-subduing pages, or

appear lost in reverie whilst gazing "o'er the waters of the deep blue sea."

It was the evening following my visit to the Devil's Bridge, whilst I was on the beach, enjoying, at the close of the sultry summer day, the refreshing breeze from the ocean, gazing on the huge globe of fire gradually descending to the waves, and watching the play of the glittering, fantastic figures which its departing light created in the depths beneath, when a footstep, close behind me, diverted my attention, and, turning round, I beheld my strange companion of the previous day.

It was a part of the beach little frequented, and I certainly felt somewhat surprised that the stranger should so unceremoniously intrude himself upon me.

"I trust I do not disturb your reverie?" said he, with a smile, whilst seating himself on the pebbles beside me.

I did not wish to show him that he was unwelcome; and in my reply, after alluding to the light nature of the meditations he had interrupted, I inquired after his health.

He appeared to be gratified that I had met him half-way in his overture to a renewal of our companionship, and we soon became engaged in an animating and interesting conversation. I know not if his object was to show me the extent of his attainments; he certainly impressed me with the conviction that his acquirements were indeed great, and that he had been gifted with a mind of no ordinary character. He had also that unaffected ease of manner which leads you to feel more at home with some in the course of a first interview, than an acquaintance of long standing with others more constrained. So freely did we converse, that a listener would have judged us to be old friends rather than strangers to each other; and so we continued, until my companion, in the course of our colloquy, put a question to me which vividly recalled to my recollection the frantic fit I had witnessed the previous day, and impressed me with the opinion that, if his mind was not unhinged, there was indeed a dark cloud upon it.

We were speaking of Colton, and my companion, after quoting and expatiating on the beauty of that passage which occurs in his "Lacon" —wherein he compares knowledge beaming on the world "to the moon shining on the ocean, which, though far removed from the wide expanse which it illumines with serene and sober light, is the chief cause of all those ebbings and flowings which agitate that restless world of waters" —proceeded to ask me if I did not think the writer a man of great mind, and whether I had read his expressed opinion as to the courage or cowardice of the act of self-destruction?

For a short time I was silent, his question having given birth to a fearful suspicion in my mind, which led me from that moment to regard the stranger with a much less favourable eye than before. I observed a derisive smile playing on his countenance, when at length, in answer to his question, I replied that I was acquainted with the expressed opinion he had alluded to; and more, that the writer had adopted the expedient; but that the world looked upon the fact of Colton having taken his own life as showing that he was conscious, at the time he penned the paragraph, of being destitute of that moral courage which is one of the finest traits in the character of man. In continuance of the subject, my companion made further observations, in which he treated the opinion of

the world with but little reserve, declaring that prejudice and superstition, and not reason and judgment, led the van.

The sun had long sunk below the horizon, and night was fast asserting its dominion over the vast expanse of waters before us, when, rising from the beach, we directed our steps towards the parade. Our conversation insensibly led us into a dispute on the precepts laid down in Holy Writ, and the possibility of man, as constituted, in this world carrying into practice the great teachings of Christianity. I have always a great aversion to such discussions; and on this occasion, the freedom with which my strange companion entered on the subject, and the language he used, somewhat startled me, and was, indeed, the chief cause of my pleading the chilliness of the night-wind to take the shortest way on our return, and, if possible, end the subject.

I remember that it was as we were passing a low ledge of rock which, from the shore running out some distance into the sea, with it, black and jagged surface appears like some leviathan reposing on its element, and as I had been pressed by the excited stranger at my side to admit that, with the passions implanted in man's nature, it was as difficulty verging on impossibility to practise the precept in all things of returning good for evil, that, suddenly stopping, and laying his hand on my arm, he exclaimed,

"To forgive your bitterest enemy, to fondle the vampire whilst he sucked your blood!" And he burst into a frantic laugh, which made me shudder.

He did not, however, proceed, as I was apprehensive he would, to utter those fearful imprecations which I had on the day previous listened to when he was similarly excited. By a strong effort he appeared to master his emotion, and was silent, though he trembled violently as we resumed our walk.

I began to regret that I had not earlier expressed in stronger terms my dissent from the principles he upheld, and at the same time terminated our acquaintance. I was inclined to look upon him with anything but a favourable eye—a wretch, perhaps, who was vainly endeavouring, by the sophisms of unbelief, to ease a load of crime which possibly darkened and oppressed his soul.

"You perceive I am very excitable," said the stranger, when he next addressed me; "I should avoid such subjects." He paused, as though expecting me to make a reply, but I did not speak. We walked on for some time in silence, when he again offered a remark. It was on a different subject, to which I made such replies as to evince that I was not desirous of continuing our conversation; and I felt not a little relieved as we neared the Belle Vue, at which hotel it appeared he was also staying.

There appeared to be a mutual understanding as we reached the threshold of the hotel, that we should there separate. The unfavourable opinion which I had formed of the stranger prompted me to avoid rather than seek a continuance of his society. As we parted, I noticed him hesitate, as though debating in his mind whether or not to make some further observation to me; but probably it was my fancy; and, wishing each other good evening, we sought our respective rooms.

I found several of the brotherhood present, some luxuriating amidst the fumes of bohea, and others engaged at their writing-desks, preparing their despatches. Following the example of the latter, I sat down and wrote my letters; then, drawing a chair to one of the open windows, sat enjoying

the fine prospect of the far-spreading ocean, which the rising moon was just streaking with pallid light. I tried in vain, however, to banish the stranger from my thoughts; there was a degree of mystery about him which I was curious to penetrate, and, baneful as I had before conceived his presence to be, I began to regret that I had parted with him without learning something of his history.

It was somewhat more than an hour after our return, when the waiter entered the room bearing a note, and after a survey of all present he advanced to me, and placed it in my hands. It bore no direction. I therefore interrogated the man if he was sure he had delivered it to the right person, to which he replied that it was from the gentleman who had been with me that evening, and that he was instructed to wait for a reply. The black seal I noticed, ere I tore it open, bore a crest and motto, which I did not pause to decipher. As I conjectured, the note came from the stranger, and contained a pressing request that I would favour him with an hour or so of my society. After a few moments' deliberation, influenced, I must confess, in coming to a decision by my curiosity, I decided upon complying with the request, and, conducted by the waiter, I found myself once more in the presence of my companion of the beach.

As I entered the room he was setting at a table, on which was a writing-desk, and he appeared to have been engaged in penning a letter, which lay open before him. At his feet, on the rug, I noticed a handsome dog of the King Charles's breed, which my entrance had awakened from its slumbers, and which I little thought, as its short bark met my ear, that it was to be a prized companion of mine for many years to come.

The stranger, in rising to receive me, expressed himself as highly gratified that I had accepted his invitation—reached me a chair—collected and locked up his papers; then reseating himself, challenged me to wine, of which, evidently in expectation of my coming, there was on the table, together with spirits, full choice. My entertainer, previous to my joining him, had been taking champagne, which for some time after he continued freely to imbibe, with little or no apparent effect upon him.

I had been with him somewhat more than half an hour; there had been a kind of restraint in our conversation, which was obvious to both. We had talked of wines, of smoking, abstemiousness, illness and health, when the stranger, who was evidently much depressed in spirits, and who, I felt convinced, had something which he wished to communicate, and was undecided how to commence, suddenly rose from his seat, and, unlocking his depository of papers, took from a small drawer therein a miniature painting, which, without uttering a word, he placed in my hands.

It was the portrait of a young girl of some nineteen or twenty, with the most angelic countenance I ever beheld, whether produced by the limner's art, or in the reality of breathing humanity. It was a sunshiny, joyous, happy face, and pure in expression as though belonging to the regions of heaven. The artist had been peculiarly happy, for he had caught, and there before me was, the animation of being—the fine hazel eyes seemed as though they answered my steadfast gaze, and the longer I looked upon it, as if by some magic spell, it appeared as though I held in my hand a thing of life.

I know not how long my gaze had been rivetted upon the painting, when my companion, leaning over from his chair, with a voice that seemed slightly to falter, said,

"Is she not beautiful?"

He did not give me time to reply, but continued with a voice that, as he proceeded, was scarcely articulate,

"But she is dead—dead—dead. She is lost to me for ever."

"The love of such a being would make a paradise of earth," I exclaimed, involuntarily.

"And yet to me it has been a hell!" said the stranger, uttering the words with a startling energy.

With these words he paused, and then hastily filling and draining his glass, continued, in a somewhat less excited manner,

"Can you wonder, sir, that my soul should be harrowed to its core when the image of such a treasure, lost by my own folly, is brought before me? By a strange fatality, you, sir, brought yesterday the happiest scenes of my life vividly before me, and unconsciously sent the iron deep into my soul by the utterance of a few lines of a simple song. The angel whose likeness is before you was to have been my wife, and, in the sunshine of our exchanged affections, that composition, which was her favourite, we sang many and many a time together. I know not, care not to know, whether I have been drawn towards you, stranger as you are, from that circumstance, or from the desire to account for that bitter spirit and hardened heart which I could not fail to perceive you judge as arising from something more than physical suffering. And if you did surmise that conscience was the devil busy within, I will show you how near the truth was your conjecture, and how just and well-merited has been my punishment. Listen."

Reader, I do not pretend to give the language exactly as made use of by the stranger in communicating his history to me. Seven years have almost passed away since the meeting which I have been describing took place, and as I did not then entertain the most remote idea of giving my experiences of life to the world, I made no notes, and consequently now write from memory. The substance of the stranger's communication is as fresh in my recollection as though I had listened to his strange narrative but yesterday; and though I cannot expect to give exactly his language, I shall endeavour to preserve the fervour and romantic colouring which pervaded his story.

"The very room in which we are now sitting, a few, a very few years ago, beheld that fair girl its inmate. She sat where you are now seated, and by her side one to whom I owed my existence, gone also to her last home. Yes, they are for ever lost to me, and I wander now through the scenes which saw my happiest hours, to look upon them once again, and then——"

He paused; a dark shadow passed over his features, he filled and drained his glass, and, pointing to the dog sleeping at his feet, thus continued:

"This little fellow was once caressed by her whose miniature lies before you. It is necessary that we part. I wish to find him a good master: will you accept of him? You must take him with you when you leave me to-night; I shall not see you to-morrow, as I purpose leaving by the mail early in the morning."

I felt some reluctance in accepting the dog. He was valuable, being thorough-bred, and as under the circumstances I could not offer an equivalent, I thanked my entertainer, but begged to decline the offer. The stranger, however, seeming hurt at my refusing to take the animal, on his again urging the request, I rang the bell, and had him at once trans-

ferred to the stable, to be placed in the stall of my Rosinante. Almost blind with age, I have the little fellow still in my possession; a highly-prized memento of one of the many strange "Incidents on the Road" it has been my lot to meet with.

As I have already observed, for some time after my joining him the stranger drank freely of wine. This he afterwards changed for spirits, and it was about the time that their united effect began to manifest itself, that he commenced his narrative.

"Were mine a history of happiness," he began, "I would dwell on the opening and continuance of its joys—it is one of folly and madness, and brief shall be the recital of its bitterness. You see before you, sir, one of a family whose progenitors can be traced far into the past—an unsullied pedigree, a name exalted as much in former years, as I, a depraved descendant, have debased it. My father died as I attained manhood, leaving me, his only child, sole heir of all save an annuity to my mother. The melancholy event occurred within a few days of the time appointed for my marriage with the fair girl, whose childish friendship had, with increasing years, grown, as grew mine, into the warmest attachment. We had been playmates from our earliest days, for she was an orphan, consigned by her father, on his death, to the guardianship of mine; they were old friends, and it had been their delight to anticipate, even in our infancy, the time when their friendship might be cemented by our union. It may be necessary here to tell you that her fortune, which was considerable, is now mine, and I live to enjoy it."

A bitter smile passed over the countenance of the speaker as he uttered the latter part of the sentence, and, after tossing off the contents of his glass at a draught, he resumed.

"I was wealthy, ardent in my temperament, and though betrothed to one of the loveliest and best of women, eagerly panted for the novelties and pleasures of life in town, a description of which had been sent to me by an old schoolfellow with whom I corresponded, and who, on a handsome patrimony, had been for some time, as he described it, revelling in enjoyment, and taking deep draughts from the goblet of pleasure with the choicest spirits in the land. He ridiculed my intention of parting with my bachelorship before seeing a little more of the world, and closed the inspiring theme, whose glowing colours had fired my imagination, with a pressing invitation to visit London and him, if only for a brief period.

"The probation of my marriage, which must take place in consequence of my father's death, appeared to me in prospect intolerably long; and scarce had the tear of sorrow dried on my mother's cheek, ere I hurried, by an impulse which I did not care to control, under a plausible pretext hastened to the metropolis. It seems to me but as yesterday, and even now I can fancy I hear the tones of my mother's voice when I parted from her, uttering the last blessing I should ever hear from her lips. Yes, I left her and my affianced wife, and soon after had joined the votaries of pleasure in town, day after day followed the phantom, and, spell-bound, plunged deeper and deeper into the deceptive jaws of ruin.

"A month soon flew past. I wrote to my widowed mother and my intended bride, alleging, as an excuse for my prolonged absence, that I found it impossible to settle the affairs—which I had caused my lawyer so to manage as to require my presence for a period in town—assuring them that, as soon as the business was satisfactorily arranged, I would return.

"Time flew on; in addition to my career of dissipation, gambling, the all-powerful fiend, had fixed its cursed talons upon me, and I found it impossible to rescue myself from the grasp. Ruin, disgrace, like a yawning gulf, lay before me; the dark mists which ascended from the black abyss overpowered me; I beheld the danger, but could not tear myself away.

"I will not inflict upon you the particulars of my gambling career, beyond this, that I was a novice—a pigeon most cruelly plucked. Month followed month; immense losses made me desperate; that will-o'-the-wisp—Hope, had led me on, and I remember it was at the period when the madness of my infatuation was fearfully revealed to me, that I received a letter from my affianced wife, in which she informed me that my mother was seriously ill, her own health much impaired, and imploring, if I retained any affection for them, to return immediately. That night saw the consummation of my folly. Recklessly desperate, I had resolved to retrieve in part my losses, or sacrifice all. I was ruined. Even then the bubble had not burst; tempted by a fiend in human shape, through an artifice conceived by his devilish ingenuity, I became possessed of the sum forming my widowed mother's annuity. It followed the general wreck. I was a ruined, a disgraced gamester."

The stranger paused, displaying considerable agitation, and it was some moments ere he resumed his narrative.

"It could not long remain secret," he continued; "the dreadful truth was disclosed, and the best and most affectionate of parents became acquainted at the same moment with my ruin and my villany. The shock was too much for her in her advanced years and impaired state of health; she died, and her last prayer was offered up for me. Yes, my name was on her lips when she closed them, alas! in death for ever! The intelligence of her demise was conveyed to me as I lay on a bed of illness, physically and mentally prostrated together. I became delirious, and for some time my life was despaired of; and yet I recovered; death rarely meets the soul in friendship, and I lived to suffer. From that bed of torture I rose an altered being. Big with resolution, I determined to quit the metropolis and the demon crew with which I had associated, and pass the rest of my days in the tranquillity of my country home. Fool that I was, the conviction gradually dawned upon my half-shattered mind that I was a beggar, and that the estate which for generations had in my family descended from father to son, would soon be in the possession of a stranger.

"During my illness not a soul, save my dunning creditors, had called to see or inquire after me; and one of these harpies, to whom I owed a large amount, I was given to understand had determined to arrest me immediately on my recovery. His purpose I was enabled to frustrate, and a person at whose house I had lost some thousands, having advanced me a little cash, I hastened to quit the spot where had been worked my ruin. Scenes of my early years! the home of my boyhood! it was mine to see again. But oh the transition! The joyous spirit and buoyant step was mine no more. I returned to the home of my fathers the half-maniac drivelling fool of maturer years! Driveller, ay! I remember with what frantic grief I threw myself on the earth beside a solitary bed of flowers which had been my mother's pride, and which I had often seen her tend. Neglected, all were drooping or dead, save here and there a small bud in all the freshness and loveliness of young life, struggling to view

amidst its withered companions, rendering the contrast more sickening to my sight.

"I staggered rather than walked up to my once happy dwelling-place, and on being admitted, I stood to gaze on the family arms, which for centuries had unaltered stood where I now beheld them, carved in solid oak, and which to me now appeared invested with the language of reproach. I sought the room wherein the family had been wont to assemble, and where I learned I should find my deserted Helen. And thus alone I found her. I think I see her now, as I then beheld her, seated by the spacious window, her head reclining on her hand, whilst her gaze appeared to be intently fixed on the beautiful landscape which the room commanded. I had prevented the servants from announcing me, and so deep was her reverie, that my approaching footsteps were unnoticed. Her features were but partly presented to me on my advancing towards her, yet a glance, alas! revealed how deeply had illness and grief told upon her lovely countenance. She was attired in deep mourning, and in the book which lay open before her, and whose pages she had evidently been perusing, I recognised the family Bible."

Here the stranger again paused, and for a moment his eyes were suffused with tears.

"I dwell upon this scene," he resumed, "for it was the last time I beheld her. The pangs of remorse deprived me at that moment of the power of speech. I would have uttered her name as I approached her, but my lips moved without articulation; a feeling of suffocation oppressed me, when tears came to my relief; I fell at her feet and wept like a child. If my anguish was great before, what can describe the torture I endured when she turned to look upon me? Heavens! what a contrast to the laughing, happy girl I had left her. The hue of health on her cheek had given place to a deadly pallor, whilst her figure seemed wasted to a shadow. There was a calmness in her look, a settled serenity in her eye, a gentleness, withal, that caused me to feel as though I were in the presence of one of those blessed beings which my youthful imagination had been wont to picture as the happy denizens of the sky.

"I knelt at her feet, pouring out a rhapsody of words, acknowledging my villany, pleading with the abjectness of torturing remorse for forgiveness, and beseeching her, by our early love, to hope for brighter, happier days. But why tell you that her forgiveness I need not have asked, for her woman's heart was mine? Why dwell on a scene, the recollection of which harrows me to the soul? Enough to say, that tears rained from her eyes as she bid me seek a forgiveness above the earth's bestowing—that she would have said more had not sobs impeded her utterance—had she not, overcome by emotion, fainted in my arms."

The stranger's head here fell on his breast; he again became silent, the recollection of the circumstances which he had been describing evidently causing him most poignant anguish. Painfully interested as I had become in his narrative, I must confess, that although I begged he would no more distress himself by continuing the relation, it was with much gratification I listened as he thus resumed:

"I have already told you that it was the last time I beheld her; and to be brief, the hell hounds had been on my track; I was there arrested. I will not attempt to describe the effect produced on me by the combined passions of galling remorse and intense grief; I became delirious, frantic,

and was torn from the spot insensible to all that was passing around me. The next that I remember is, that fearful and horrid visions were mine; dread faces were continually mocking me, and my disordered imagination pictured demon-like forms, who were snatching me away from the idol which my heart had loved and lost. I was placed under restraint, a raving madman; and often have I since, in the bitterness of my soul, cursed the hour when reason dawned again upon my mind. A few months had passed from the period of my incarceration, when I was restored to health and to sanity. The truth—the dreadful truth—was then revealed to me; the fair being, the likeness of whose happy youth and beauty lies before you, was no more. Death had seized his prey shortly after our last interview. They told me that once since that parting she had seen me, and had bent her head to kiss me as I slept. The pastor of the place and the family physician had attended her in her last moments; and the latter gentleman, at her request, had given me an asylum in his house, and met the demands which had led to my being arrested. She had left to me her all. Great, too, was that fortune, but the inestimable fortune of her blessed self I had perilled and lost for ever!

"I rose from my bed a miserable wretch, a black spot on the earth, a living slur on the fair face of creation. After a short and wretched sojourn of a few days under its roof, I again quitted the old hall, which the fortune of my lost affianced wife had enabled me to save from passing into strangers' hands; and with a mind preyed upon by the most poignant recollections, and night and day afflicted by a remorse whose keen pangs all efforts to deaden were in vain, I resolved upon once more visiting the scene of my undoing. Leading to this resolve, a new feeling had been awakened in my breast. I gave way to its dark impulses, to the new spirit which inspired me; new to me—for that spirit was revenge."

The speaker, at this point in his narrative, became fearfully excited; he sprang from his chair, and paced the room with rapid strides, pausing only at times to take copious draughts of spirits, barely by water diluted. The wildness of his manner and expression of his eye strengthened the opinion which I had previously formed, that, although not shattered, his mind had not fully recovered the shock which it had sustained, and which he had confessed to its having for a time sunk beneath.

"Yes," resumed the stranger, continuing his rapid walk to and fro in the apartment, "a wild, uncontrollable feeling had dominion over me. I looked upon the world but as an arena where I might play the determined avenger, and man from that moment became hateful to my sight. I experienced a secret pleasure in concocting plans to ensure the gratification of this thirst for vengeance. My imagination pictured those who had lured me to ruin as the actual destroyers of all my heart had loved and lost. I went craftily to work; the powers of my mind seemed to be to an extraordinary degree quickened and augmented; and as I beheld my designs succeed with scarce a failure—as the meshes which I laid entangled my victims—so rose the only delight my heart could know. Call it fiendish if you will, to me it was pleasure,—ay, priceless delight.

"I caused it to be known that I had risen from the ashes of my ruin

a phœnix of great wealth, and was soon gratified by the gathering again around me of those on whom I had sworn to wreak my revenge. I pretended to receive their advances to a renewal of former friendship with gratification; and the vulture crew, who had had so mercilessly preyed upon me in the unguarded days of my former prosperity, believing me to be the same weak fool that they had plundered before, eagerly flocked to the quarry, little recking of my object and the plans I had prepared. I was wealthy; but what was wealth to me but as a powerful agent to carry out my designs. I will not dwell upon all which I have effected by means of that wealth, nor enter into the particulars of the unwearying energy which, foiled however often, returned again and again to the pursuit, until the object was accomplished. Others besides myself have lived to curse the hour which gave them birth, and I have, ay, gloated with a devil's pleasure over the wreck on the reefs of despair of more than one who had contributed to my own downfal, when I knew foul play and ingratitude but by name.

"One of my cormorant friends, who had shared largely in the spoil in the dark hour of my adversity, had been fiendish enough to taunt me with my ruin; nay, more, in return for my once taxing him, when heated by wine, with making his friendship for me but subservient to another object, he had endeavoured to cast the stain of dishonour upon my name. He, too, sought me again with the rest; and, in my impetuosity, I met his proffered embrace with the deadliest insult. He demanded satisfaction, and had it. We met; and I know not that I ever felt the spirit of evil so strong within me, as when I stood within twelve paces from my opponent with an instrument of death in my hand. He was deceived as to my skill; I had practised long and secretly, and at the first fire he fell dead on the sward.

"There was another for whom I had waited long,—ay, till months had stolen into years. It was he who had prompted me to add villany to my folly, having suggested, in his devilish ingenuity, the stratagem by which I became possessed of the funds forming my mother's annuity. He had indeed been a viper; one I had sheltered to sting me. Cold-blooded also was he in his villany; for, in the midst of my ruin and my illness, he had refused to see me, although under the mask of friendship he had lured me to London, and introduced me to the gang of plunderers with which he was connected. He was my dearest enemy. I had marked him for my victim; and, after long watching for my chance with unwearying vigilance, never was bird more artfully snared by the hands of the fowler. With him I had resumed the outward semblance of former friendship, and affected to believe his protestations of the sincerity of his esteem for me, and the equity of his former conduct. He was glad to perceive, as he flattered himself, that I was as manageable, as trusting, and as blind as ever; and becoming, after the renewal of our companionship, somewhat reduced in circumstances, he calculated in emergencies on me for pecuniary assistance. And this, from time to time, I granted. It was then he became affianced to a fair girl, with whose dowry he intended to restore his fallen fortunes; and to her he was known but as a gentleman of affluent circumstances, and as a man of honour. Enough, that the day which should have witnessed his marriage beheld him the inmate of a prison, not only a ruined, but a disgraced gamester; for, in

addition to the sums he was indebted to me, I had laid a snare affording him every facility, and he had forged my name. To gloat over the full measure of my vengeance, my last victim, I proceeded to his prison to triumph over him; but in this I was disappointed, for, curse him, I found only a corpse, with the throat cut from ear to ear; his own hand had done the deed which robbed me of a part of my revenge."

The stranger, who, towards the conclusion of his history, had become much excited, after the last sentence poured forth a rhapsody of words, in which were mingled imprecations fearful to listen to. I endeavoured to allay the excitement which I perceived was rapidly mastering him; but my efforts were vain. He seemed to become unconscious of my presence, his eyes wildly glaring, his countenance horribly distorted, and, as I before had beheld him, he sank on the floor exhausted by his maniac-like ravings.

I immediately rang the bell; the waiter came, and, together, we bore him to a sofa which was in the room. He was much longer in recovering than from the attack which I had witnessed at the Devil's Bridge; and when he was sufficiently composed, I recommended his immediately retiring to rest. Looking at my watch, and perceiving that it was past midnight, I extended my hand to bid him good night.

"Stay," said the stranger; "I have something that I wish to——" He paused, and then, giving me his hand, added, "No matter; good night."

I was leaving the room, when his voice again called on me to return. I stood once more by his side. He appeared to be hesitating and debating within himself on some undecided course of action, resting his eyes upon me the while with an expression of misery and suffering in his still handsome though careworn features, that would have awakened a pang of pity in the breast of a savage. After a long, and to me painful, pause, during which he seemed to have decided against acting up to the motive which had induced him to call me back, he again extended his hand to me, and said,

"I thank you for your company. Once more, good night; good-by."

His hand shook in mine as I held it, and the expression of his eyes, as we parted, I shall never forget. I quitted the room, and never saw him again.

I learned the following morning that he had left by the Cheltenham mail; and, in a few days afterwards, I saw a report in the papers of the death, by his own hand, in a fit of temporary insanity, of —— ——, a member of one of the oldest families in ——shire, and the last of his race. From circumstances related connected with the death so announced, I had but little room to doubt that the self-destroyer was my late companion of the beach, "My Strange Acquaintance of the Devil's Bridge."

THE COURT-MARTIAL.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

In Two Parts.—Part II.

Chapter III.

On regaining the miserable little suburban inn, at which they had taken up their temporary abode on their arrival at Plymouth in the morning, Mrs. Thornton, in answer to her inquiries respecting him, was informed by the potboy, who acted in the capacity of waiter to the casual visitors as well, that the gentleman was still in the small back parlour where she had left him; that he had not been out during the whole of the day; and that he had ordered nothing.

On entering the said room, followed by her reluctant son, she found her husband pacing rapidly up and down the very limited space, as was his wont when under any peculiar agitation or excitement. There was no signs of fire in the coal-black grate, although the weather was most intensely severe; nor did it appear, from the bare and freshly scoured deal table, that he had had any refreshment. Still, his looks were too sullen and repulsive for her to dare to question how he had passed those long and lonely hours, uncheered by the genial warmth of a fire, unsustained by the food which craving nature demanded, in its sinking and sad ruminations.

He did not betray the slightest token of recognition; he did not offer the slightest salutation of welcome, either to his wife or son, after the weariful, the woeful day they had both spent, nor did he ask one single word of information, as to the result of that important day, of them. As they seated themselves silently near each other, he judged, by the pallid and tear-stained countenance of the one, the shame and dejection of the other, and more than all, by the suit of plain clothes in which Richard was dressed, that the journey had proved a fruitless one: his wife had failed in her attempts to save her son, the money obtained with so much difficulty expended for worse than nought, and that another heavy incumbrance was thrown upon his hands, in the disgraced and ruined fine gentleman he then beheld.

Although in the chill grey light of a dreary winter afternoon, which adds an almost death-like hue to the face of misery and despair, he contemplated those of the two beings, which ought to have been so dear to him, more wan than death itself; still, still more firmly did he set his closely-compressed and colourless lips, as if to prison, within their sternly-locked portals, the partial sympathy which their evident sufferings might awaken in a bosom predetermined not to be melted by compassion, and continued his harassing and nervous walk, as if they had not been present, either to be pained by his taciturnity, or annoyed by his restlessness. At length, however, stopping with an abrupt and startling energy before Richard, as if he had been lashing up his feelings to a rude and violent attack on him, he said, in a dry, hard tone,

"Well, sir, what do you intend to do next? Of course your mother has told you that there are seven little mouths at home which I must fill by my daily slavery."

"Father, do not fear; I will not increase that slavery, but, if possible, greatly diminish it by my own."

"How, pray?"

"By obtaining some lucrative employment."

"You! Why, who do you imagine would be idiot enough to give lucrative employment, or even employment for nothing, to a publicly denounced drunkard?"

This grossness, this illiberality was too much, even from a justly-incensed father, for the already overwrought feelings of the wretched young man, and, bounding from his seat as if shot, while every fibre of his frame shook with the convulsive agony of a cruelly-wounded spirit, he rushed out of the room, lest he might say that in a moment of deeply-stung passion, the utterance of which he might ever after deplore.

"O David!" exclaimed the distracted mother, bursting into tears, and clasping her hands together in the wildest ecstasy of contending emotions—"O David! have you no mercy for the poor boy? How can you be so utterly relentless towards him at such a time? Good God! your unkindness is enough to drive him to desperation."

"So much the better; then you might feel disposed to take an interest in those who more deserve your affection."

"I do love all alike; I protest I do; but the fastest bleeding wound should be the quickest stanched. And, Heaven knows, his is sufficiently fresh to require the promptest assistance. I did think, I did hope, that you also, David, would aid me in allaying its smartings; its throbbings; its acute tortures. Remember, my husband—oh! pray remember—how sensitive is the mind of youth; how keenly alive it is to all the finer susceptibilities of humanity; how easily it is elevated by hope; how easily depressed by disappointment; how quick the sense of shame; how vivacious the sentiment of gratitude; how strong its trust in others; how dependent its tenderness; how reliant its faith. Let us then soothe—only soothe that delicately-constructed mind just for the present, my dear husband, lest we overthrow the glorious fabric of reason, and then have to sit amongst its ruins, desolate and unpitied;—let us endeavour to second that Providence who never yet allowed the son of the righteous man to perish. You would be the very last, David, to forgive yourself, should anything of a more awful nature occur to distress us for him; and the more particularly, if you could, even only remotely, accuse yourself as occasioning the despair which we should both so eternally deplore, with all your affected stoicism, your pretended Roman obduracy. Let me hasten to the poor boy in your name; let me be the bearer of a kind message from you to him; let us draw him nearer to our hearts by the bonds of misfortune; let us reason together with him, as friend with friend; and see what affection can devise, hope suggest, and confidence realise in his behalf. Do, my dear David, do! You know not the happiness you deny yourself, the wrong you do to your better nature, in thus shutting the door of your heart's love against the sorrowing child who is not yet criminal, but who may soon become so through your inflexibility. Let us consecrate this night to

the unrestrained outpourings of the holiest of all earthly affections; let us mutually confer, mutually advise, mutually strengthen our son in this his first great trial—a trial that comes clouded with dishonour; let us disperse that cloud, and bid the sun of youthful enterprise again irradiate his onward path. Let us feel, and make him *feel* that the really upright need not despond, even amidst the most serious visitations; for that though weeping may endure for a night, still joy cometh in the morning; the joy that fadeth not away; the joy which will, if we succeed in snatching this dear one from meditated infamy, shed its soft refulgence over the humble but yet sanctified graves of the parents, sleeping well after their work was accomplished; whom he will come to seek and thank for their timely rescue, in the fulness of his own honourable age. May I go to him, then, my beloved husband? May I go to our stricken son, and speak encouragingly to him in his father's name?"

"You may do as you please."

Elated with this even uncordial permission, Mrs. Thornton flew upstairs to the garret, where she imagined her son was.

She found him seated by a small table, on which lay his sword; the other articles of a lieutenant's full and handsome naval uniform were on the bed; while the remainder of his things were scattered about on the floor; for all he had left on board the vessel from which he had been so ignominiously discharged had been sent on shore, with an exactitude which proved that he was not expected to visit it again.

His mother perceived by the light of the candle, which was reflected full on his face, that Richard had been weeping violently; perhaps over the departed glory of that very sword; and, at the affecting idea of his blighted ambition, the tears sprang into her own eyes, and clasping him to her bosom, she sobbed out,

"My precious boy, my adored Richard, bear up, for the sake of your mother."

"I will—I intend," he replied, returning her embrace with the greatest fervour; "I should deem myself indeed unfit to live, if ever I did aught again to aggravate your many sorrows—if ever, for a single instant, I forgot what I owe you, what a mother I have had."

"And will have, my darling; and will have, till the warmth of this fond heart is chilled by death. Oh! my Richard, would I could do more for you, for all of you; but, alas! I am but a powerless, poverty-stricken woman. Yet, God pardon me for murmuring, when I have actually the felicity of seeing you before my eyes; of feeling your dear arms round my neck; you, whom I might have lost in battle! how should I have mourned then?"

"What! more so than for my disgrace?"

"A thousand times. Your disgrace, as you harshly term it, I look upon as the merest act of boyish indiscretion; one, far too heavily, too unjustly punished."

"But, my father—my father! he regards it as the most criminal of transgressions—he will never forgive it, never palliate it."

"Yes, he will. He already repents of his severity."

"And well he may, mother,—and well he may, although he is my father, and I have given great provocation to anger; yet, oh mother! to be reproached like the veriest felon—to be cast forth as the utterest re-

probate—to be shook off, as it were, like a cankered blossom, to rot on the face of the dank earth—to be thrust out of the pale of paternal affection, paternal solicitude, paternal holiness—to starve—to *starve*—O mother! mother! not even to wait for the decent excuse of my importunity, ere he condemned me to destitution, ere he refused to rob my brothers and sisters for me, ere he left me to banquet on the prodigal's *husks*, as the proper reward of my profligacy and intemperance—was most cruel. He might have delayed to exhibit such austerity until he saw the result of this morning's fearful sentence on the aggrieved mind of his son; whether it sunk him to despair, or restrung him for more determined exertion, he might have paused ere *his* hand launched the arrow which pierced the deepest, the surest, the deadliest.

"I know how much he has had to sour his temper, what struggles to contend with, what constant disappointments to endure. I know how hard it is for a man to witness the silent uncomplaining sufferings of those around him; whose wants, although mute, cry aloud in the wan cheek, the hollow eye, the attenuated frame, and declare the secret ravages of famine and penury, with a voice of anguish which paralyses the energies of the heart; the famine and penury which he cannot alleviate! I know that he has been a good father to me in many respects; Heaven forbid that I should ever lose sight of what he has done for me; but, mother, his upbraidings at such a time did almost cancel the sense of filial obligation—did quite cut me to the soul's quick!"

"His conduct was most unfeeling, I admit; yet, Richard, I am much mistaken if your father has not suffered the most poignantly from those ill-timed upbraidings. The shame of poverty, the mortifications of pride, and the invariable defeat of the most praiseworthy, the most legitimate endeavours to conquer outrageous fortune, affect the human mind variously. Some bow at once to the dispensations of Providence, with a submission soothing to themselves and pleasing to the Almighty. Others yield to a hopeless moodiness, which discourages from all further efforts; and others contend to the last, fighting foot to foot with destiny, and struggling to maintain the unequal combat, with every one against them, and even the plaudits of self-gratulation; and of such *is* your father; therefore you must rather pity than blame him, for, in wounding others, he is still struck by the repercussion of the instrument he points at their bosoms."

"Mother, I do pity him; nay, more, I am even grateful, in a measure, for his unkindness; for, although it did appear literally to rend the skin from my heart at first, it has acted salutarily on it since—most salutarily. When the bark is wounded, the tender sapling perishes; but when the heart of man is excoriated by the hand of adversity, it seems strengthened and invigorated."

"Oh! my Richard, how do those words diffuse comfort on that of your mother. I will not deny that it has palpitated, even up to this moment, with a defineless, but yet most appalling dread of your making some desperate attempt to release yourself from your present overwhelming misery."

"You mean self-destruction, mother? More than once have I thought of it within the last four-and-twenty most eventful hours—more than *once*. I thought of it when I stood as a criminal before those relentless

men—I thought of it when you lay insensible on this aching breast—and I thought of it when, in an agony of emotion, I hurried from a father's direful scowl of reprehension. Yes! twice since I have been in this obscure spot have I thought of it—twice have I stretched forth this hand to reach that sword, mother, on which your eye so misgivingly gazes, to terminate all future shame, sorrow, and remorse; but the manlier determination to rise above despair—the holier resolution not to provoke everlasting anguish and pain—the redeeming memory of the last prayer I heard from those venerated lips ere I set sail on the wide sea of temptation, 'May he never fall from Thee, O God! may he never fall from *Thee!*'—and the consciousness which elevates and ennobles, even while it wrings the heart; that from the very bud of youthful folly may spring the fruit of sound and vigorous virtue in maturity, if a man, schooled by experience and attempered by chastisement, is resolved never to convert that inconsiderate folly into deliberate crime—hence I scorn and repudiate the cowardly escape which suicide offers for temporary misfortunes; hence I despise and forswear the evil suggestions of a casual and enervating depression of the mind; yet not with an audacious contempt, revolting alike to God and man, but with a thankful and subduing triumph that humiliates the conscience which approves."

"My precious Richard! how do those sentiments assure me that you are not forsaken of Him who, while you still foster such, *will* befriend you?"

"I know it—I know it! Mother, do not deem me either a visionary or an enthusiast; but I feel that stirring within me which tells me that I shall be victorious over this first stroke of adverse fortune; that I shall not only surmount this, but every other ground-swell on which my bark of life will in future be, perhaps, rudely tossed, but not submerged—no! not submerged, for I shall land, at last, in a calm and sunny haven, with all I love around me.

"The gauntlet is thrown down, mother, the challenge is proclaimed, the lists prepared, and I feel like a young athlete braced and breathed for the tremendous struggle—nerved to the highest pitch of resolution to wrestle with destiny, and to overcome it! Oh, the innate, the strong self-reliance, the firmly abiding power of youth! what can subdue it, what conquer it? Now, for the first time, I feel thrown *entirely* on my own resources, to buffet with the waves of the unfathomed ocean of Time, without pilot and without chart; yet I turn not away from the trial, nor fear shipwreck from the attempt; I feel able to dare all, and to succeed in all—to win Fortune in despite of herself, and make her the anchor of the vessel which bears me safely and exultingly into the harbour of peace."

"Ah! my dear boy, that is a beautiful image, but how is it to become a reality?"

"By labour; mother, by perseverance; by dipping my pencil into the Iris-hues of hope; by trusting to the rainbow, a divine hand set in the heavens to assure man that the waters should no more overwhelm him! In the regular service, as it is called, I grant, there is higher rank and more dignity, but it is less adventurous than the merchant, the one I mean to try. In the former, promotion and reward so invariably progress, are so undeviatingly observed, that if only ordinarily subordinate and amenable to its laws, only commonly obedient and submissive to his superiors,

a youth must attain eminence; but when he has nothing to trust to but his own exertions to work his way up the steep and slippery shrouds, on the top of which are seated that wealth and fame after which he is so manfully toiling, how far, far greater is the stimulus to gain that inviting apex!"

"You are too sanguine, Richard, and I tremble for your certain disappointment. Be warned by what you have already suffered, my dear son, I entreat you, and do not indulge in vain and improbable expectations."

"They are not vain, they are not improbable, mother; they are as sure of accomplishment, if I live, as any anticipations can be, in a world subject to constant change and ever-recurring vicissitude, for they are the inspirations of the best, the noblest impulses of man's nature—the oblations of gratitude to the shrine of benevolence. But read this letter," he, having taken one from off the bed, added; "read this letter, mother; it came with that once too proudly valued insignia of boyish ambition—the sword, whose lustre I have since so tarnished."

"Do not keep dwelling on that one painful point in your young life's history, my darling. The lustre of that sword is only transiently dimmed. You may, and you *will*, shed on it the glorious refulgence of a still more enduring radiance, if you only choose, Richard, to pursue the brilliant path of honour and honesty in which you commenced your career—only continue to be that which you have hitherto been, the hope and joy of your mother's heart, so that she may pray for your future prosperity, without shaming the angels by demanding that from Heaven which will rather provoke its anger against you than win its approbation, were you no longer worthy of divine assistance."

"Do, pray, read the letter, mother; you will there see the steady principles which did actuate your son up to this calamitous moment. You will there see if my one deviation from them is likely to be permanent. You will there see that, young as I am, I cultivated the kindred feeling which draws man to man; that. in fact, when in my power, I served those who, in return, are now willing to serve me; that the bread I cast upon the waters *is* found after many days."

Mrs. Thornton, after kissing his clear, candid brow, and blessing him from the deepest depth of her soul, opened the letter, and read the following generous effusion:—

"My dear Thornton,—My father came on board this afternoon to see me, as soon as the result of the court-martial was known, in such a state of hilarity, that I told him plainly such an exhibition of mirth was not only highly indecorous and unbecoming in a person of his years, but also exceedingly unfeeling and out of place, and that he must either quit the ship instantly, or endeavour to conceal it; for that every one in it besides, without an exception, was bitterly lamenting the harsh and unexpected sentence just pronounced upon you.

"'That is it,' he replied to my reproof; 'that is it which makes me so glad; not absolutely glad, either,' he continued, 'because I fear Mr. Thornton will feel it so acutely; still, as far as I am concerned, I can but look upon that very sentence as a *special* interference of Providence, as however else should I have had it in my power to evince the gratitude

with which my heart is actually bursting for his kindness and humanity to you, Arthur, when you lay prostrated by fever far away from your home—far away from your mother's gentle soothings? Oh! my son, my dear, dear son! there is not one single word of the letter which you sent us, informing us of your peril, your almost certain death, or his wonderful restoration from the grave, and of his attentions to you, which has not been kissed over and over again by our grateful lips—blotted by our grateful tears—clasped between our grateful hands as we knelt side by side in prayer for you! How can a father ever forget the generous-hearted youth, the mere boy who, regardless of fatigue, indifferent to danger, nursed his child with unabating tenderness through a long and infectious disease? How can a father ever hope to repay such noble, such disinterested conduct? And how can a mother forget——' and here he became affectingly solemn—'how can a mother ever forget, that when her exiled darling was vibrating between life and death, the young guardian who watched over, him did not neglect the higher cares of the soul in ministering to the necessities of the body? The account of your receiving the Sacrament *together* drew him to her heart, where he is held as another son! Yet did we both despair of having an opportunity of testifying our gratitude and admiration of him, when, as if the yearnings of our hearts had been at last heard, this, to him mortifying, but to us most joyful, event happened to ease ours!

"'Oh! if we can only persuade the gallant young man to view it in the same favourable light; if he will only believe that good does occasionally come out of evil, his fortune is made—made through *me*, God be praised!

"'Write to him then, Arthur; write to him immediately, and in as delicate a manner as you can; propose to him the command of the vessel whose cargo I have just completed the *Daphne;* you know what a handy little craft she is; be as eloquent as you are able, without being offensive; persons who have never known reverses have no idea how sensitive are the feelings of those who have—how jealous they are of their wounded pride—and the best intentions are frequently defeated by a rude and boisterous importunity, the natural effects of never-flagging rough prosperity. Be careful, then, how you break the matter in question to Mr. Thornton; tell him that I shall be the only really obliged party in the transaction, for that, aware of his admirable sailorship, I shall be satisfied of the safety of the vessel, and shall consequently benefit by his nautical skill, no doubt; tell him, also, that I leave the disposal of its costly stores entirely to his judgment, and that in whatever way he may think proper to barter for our mutual advantage, I shall be perfectly content, convinced that he acts for the best; tell him, in fact, that I look upon him as a man of the strictest, the most unblemished integrity; and that I shall be only too happy if he will honour me with a similar opinion; tell him, as a final inducement to influence his sensibility, that the peace of your mother's declining life and mine depends on his thus allowing us to relieve our bosoms of the overpowering weight of obligation now oppressing them, by his condescending to accept the present humble proposition.' So, you see, my dear Thornton, simply how the affair stands. I thought I could not do better than state it in my old father's earnest and energetic language. Will you then confer the favour on him which he so sincerely

solicits? Will you, waving the dignity of your late position, accept the command of a less distinguished flag? and, by so doing, afford a fond father, a pious mother, the gratification of showing their gratitude to one who was kind to a son who, until this day, did not know how dear he was to those parents, how worthy they were of that son's love, respect, and veneration. Do not deny us, my dear friend, do not deny us, my almost brother, but, early to-morrow morning, let me have the more than pleasure of embracing you, of introducing you to my father and mother, as the future brave commander of the dauntless little *Daphne.*

"Awaiting that pleasing moment, I am, my dear Thornton,

"Yours, most faithfully,

"ARTHUR WARREN."

"There, mother, *there*, my blessed mother! you see your Richard is not quite an outcast, not quite a beggar!"

"Oh! let us hasten to your father with the glad tidings; let him at once participate in our joy. Whilst he is a stranger to it, I consider it only half complete. Come, Richard, come! let him feel, that the sun which arose for us in darkness this morning, is setting, indeed, most gorgeously. Come, come, this will reunite our hearts again."

Fully sympathising in his mother's ardent impatience, Richard hurried down stairs after her, and entered the room just as she flung her arms round her husband's neck, exclaiming, "O David, our boy is saved—our boy is saved! Come, and tell your father all," she added, looking up with an expression of the most beaming delight. "Come, and tell your father all."

This was soon done, and when Mr. Thornton heard in what manner his son had made the friends who now came forward to his aid, a pang of compunction smote his heart, and, instantly obeying its spontaneous and atoning dictates, he seized Richard's hand, and clasping it fervently between his own, said, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "My dear son, I did not know your incomparable merit; you must forgive the ignorance which rendered me unjust."

"My dear father—my dear father—say not another word! we have both been mutually ignorant of each other's worth; but this day has been a day of real instruction, may we never forget the lesson it has taught us. May *I* ever remember, that I have a father, who, amidst the most awful privations, never sullied his soul's integrity, and never chided his son, save when he thought he *had;* and may *you* remember, oh, my father! that you have a son, who will yet efface that blot from the purity of his name—a son who will hereafter consider it his duty, next to that which he owes to his Maker, to prove to the whole world that he dare not dishonour the name of such a father, without strenuously endeavouring to retrieve its glory; and that that son will, through the blessing of God, yet become what a mother, in the *faith* of her heart, predicted—the *making of his family.*"

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXV.—(CONTINUED.)

CORNELIUS had by this time recovered from the first shock, and succeeded in releasing himself from his wife's embraces, who clung to him as if her arms were a sacred place of shelter whence none could tear him. He was still pale, but more composed than might have been expected from the general tenor of his character.

"If, Lopez, money be an object with you, as I have often thought it is, for the sake of these," said he, pointing to his wife and daughter,—"for their dear sakes will I buy safety of you at a fair price. A good moiety of my wealth is yours, if you can preserve the other half and me for these poor, affectionate ones."

"Your daughter," answered the Spaniard proudly, "has offered the only treasure this world contains for me—the only blessing that I covet—the possession of her fair self; and yet it is beyond my power to grant her what she exacts in return. I value pearls above gold, worthy Master Cornelius; but were neither to be obtained except in the manner you point out, I must learn to live without them."

"I cannot believe in this want of power on your part," said Cornelius; "but God's will be done."

He drew a rosary from his bosom, and permitted a few beads to glide through his fingers.

In the mean time, Margaret endeavoured, in some degree, to tranquillise her mother, whose vehemence of sorrow knew no bounds; whilst Chievosa, with folded arms, gazed sorrowfully on the group before him. As he stood thus, he seemed a pitying angel amongst mourning mortals, touched by their woe, though himself above all sorrow. Few who had seen him then could have dreamed how passion could convulse those chiselled features, and swell that calm-seeming breast.

"I feel now more resigned," said Cornelius, whose pious impulse all had witnessed in silent respect; "more calm than I could have believed I ever should be under these trying circumstances. But I have, in fact, so tormented myself, for months, with the dread of what is now befalling me—so pictured to myself, for long, weary days and nights together, the pangs of such an hour, that I think they are less in reality than my fancy had depicted them. I thank you, Lopez, for what you have done for me;—it was kind to warn, even though you say you cannot save me."

"Believe me, my friend, I spoke but the truth. Even if I were to expose my life never so carelessly, and yours, too, I could not at this juncture effect an escape to England; so perfectly unprepared am I for so pressing an emergency. It is utterly impossible."

"A later opportunity will, I am afraid, be late indeed," said Cornelius, with a faint smile. "Had I but followed my brother's plans—believed his words—we should now all stand free, united, and perhaps happy, though in another land."

"Yes!" exclaimed Margaret—"free and happy! Oh, father! had you but believed uncle Paul, how well had it been for us now!"

"That is scarcely a kind, still less a politic speech," murmured her mother in her ear.

Cornelius sighed heavily as he thought upon his own folly.

"Oh, Mary!" he at length said, "if I knew you both safe, under a powerful protection, I could bear my own fate, be it what it may, with resignation. But what will become of you? This thought troubles me."

"I will follow you wherever you go," said his wife, clasping his hand in hers. "Your fate shall be mine. We have been glad together in our days of happiness, let us weep together in our hour of sorrow."

"And Margaret?" said Cornelius, severely. "Because her father is taken from her, is her mother to leave her also?"

Mistress van Meeren suffered her head to droop for a moment on her breast, then raising it again, her eyes beamed with an expression of ineffable tenderness as she gazed upon her husband.

"Margaret," she gently articulated, "has many friends."

"I, too, will follow my father," said Margaret, seizing the disengaged hand of Cornelius.

"Nay, as for that matter, we need not be anxious, Cornelius, upon her account. Let us sanction her immediate union with Lopez. She, then, has a protector whom we can at once intrust with her person and fortune. We can bear our own mishaps better when we know that she can no longer be affected by them."

Cornelius hesitated.

"It were," said he, "an unseemly haste, and would do us no credit."

"All are now too absorbed in their own concerns to think of ours," persisted Mistress van Meeren. "If we had but a few days before us!"

"No—no!" exclaimed Margaret. "Do not repulse me from you thus;—what you suffer I should and will share. But if it were not so, we have yet many friends who could protect me if you were away. Uncle Paul——"

"Ay, true—had I but believed him," said the father, with a profound sigh. "But, alas! he could not now protect you long."

"Long enough to get me to England, where the Sturgeons would befriend me," said Margaret.

"Why seek so far the protection, the kindness, the safety, you can find so near?" said Chievosa, reproachfully. "Do you, then, hate me?"

"No," replied Margaret, frankly, gazing on him through her tears; "but I mistrust you. It were easy for you, methinks, to revive my confidence. Help us in this strait. You often boasted of your power to do so."

"I had firmly put my trust in you," added Mistress van Meeren.

"I, too, have hoped much from you, Lopez," urged Cornelius.

"I will do my utmost—risk life and limb to serve you, when my endeavours can be of any avail. But why all this immoderate grief? Why give yourselves up entirely to fear? Hope ought to lighten the hour of separation, for you have every reason to hope."

"Hope and the Inquisition, whether Spanish or Flemish, are not synonymous words," said Cornelius, despondingly.

"They were not so formerly," said Chievosa; "but things are rapidly changing. All the committees instituted by the king begin to lose their

force. Unto death they certainly will not prosecute you. An act of such open aggression towards one who has so many friends would be too imprudent at the present crisis. Doubtless, as in so many other cases, it is your wealth that causes your arrest. It is too great a temptation to be withstood, and to confiscate it is their aim. You are too inoffensive for them to take your life."

"It is Paul, your beloved uncle, who has brought all this upon us," said Mistress van Meeren, indignantly, to her daughter. "Had he not lived under our roof so many years, what pretext could they have had for this proceeding."

"It is too late," said Cornelius, "to regret any portion of the past; but Lopez shows sense in speaking of the future. There is comfort in listening to him."

"Your life, I repeat, can be of no value to them; it is not that they seek, for they have no reason to fear you. But let the worst threaten; a timely application to the regent or other powers—in short, you will find in me a friend, in spite of your suspicions. All you have to dread is, therefore, a wearisome confinement, a disagreeable trial, more awful in its form than in its results, and a confiscation which you can easily evade if you choose."

"True; most true! Absorbed in other fears, I forgot—I overlooked," said the anxious father, "that a few days—what do I say? a few hours, perhaps—may deprive my Margaret of house and goods; and, but for my own timely foresight, she might even have been reduced to beggary."

"Listen to me," said Chievosa, "and I will prove that, though suspected by you, wronged and maligned by others; though a Spaniard among Flemings—in short, I can be a true friend. I will point out to you how to save, not only your fortune, but your life, should it be in the slightest jeopardy, and that at the cost of my own safety, for they will guess whence the advice could alone proceed."

"One part of my property," said Cornelius, "and a large one, is safe with Master Nicholas Rondinelli, in Florence. On that Margaret can always depend; and my brother has long since placed as much, if not more, in the hands of our trusty friends in England; so that, happen what will, she never can be portionless."

"You may save all—everything you have," said Chievosa. "I knew before of these sums placed abroad; but I know also of a certain cabinet in this house. Start not, good Master Cornelius; you will see that I have had none but good intentions in surprising your secrets. This mysterious closet has been talked of by many, depend upon it. The inquisitors will have no trouble in finding out, nor scruple in despoiling it of its hidden contents. They are too accustomed to that sort of work not to discover whatever the arras, or even the bare wall, may conceal. Even the very flooring will be closely examined. They have visited similar closets too often, and have derived too much benefit from them to be novices as to their ways and means. Bury your treasures somewhere; not behind your house altar, or behind your bed; these will be strictly searched—perhaps knocked to pieces. Nor seek to conceal any object of price in your garments. Rather bury everything you value in your cellars; or, better still, in those of a neighbour, if you can get at them."

"You seem very familiar with the ways of the Inquisition," said Margaret.

"I am. What Spaniard is not? But do you believe that guilt is inseparable from such knowledge?" said Chievosa, with emphasis, and a look of so much meaning that the remembrance of some few words which had escaped Father Eustace in their last interview caused Margaret's eyelids to droop before it.

"I know of what I think might prove a good place of concealment, said Cornelius. "My cellars communicate with those of a neighbour, who, wiser than myself, has long since betaken himself to a place of refuge. His house no one as yet has chosen to claim, as he has given out that his departure was merely on account of business which might detain him some time; but I know well he will not return. He has extensive cellars, where I might bury what I please; and, by concealing well the communication, which were easy, perhaps those demons of avarice—I mean the inquisitors of the faith—may not be able to discover it. Were my honest neighbour to come back, he would not object to this arrangement, I well know; but the house will remain deserted for many a long day."

"That will do," said Chievosa; "if you afford me but the most trifling assistance, I will presently dislodge the whole of your worldly treasures, to which, I think, your wife and daughter would be prudent if they added whatever they possess of valuable trinkets. Nothing, be assured, will be spared except their persons."

"But why, dearest father," said Margaret, "lose precious moments in securing the possession of mere earthly dross? for me too, whom, if harm befal you, nothing shall persuade to remain in the world, or even to bring one stiver of the luckless money—the cause of all our miseries—to the convent, where I shall take the veil. Why give up all idea of flight because Chievosa cannot afford you aid. Go to my uncle Paul; he has nothing to fear, he has incurred already all the dangers that can ever assail him. He, moreover, *never fears;* he may assist you to embark secretly, or, his party afford him so many means, he may conceal you, perhaps defend you openly."

"That is a light from Heaven, which has struck your child, that she might be the means of your safety!" exclaimed Mistress van Meeren, a ray of hope brightening for a moment her clouded brow. "Do not, dearest Cornelius, for her sake—for mine, neglect any chance of escape."

"You might, indeed, try," said Chievosa; "we should have thought of this sooner."

Cornelius hesitated. He reflected that so decisive a step as throwing himself on the protection of his Protestant brother would be considered as his breaking openly with the mother church, and, in case Paul could not shield him, effectually ruin him and his family beyond redemption.

Whilst her father was weighing the chances with a heavy heart and an undecided spirit, Margaret glided softly from the room, hurried to her old and faithful nurse, whose blind devotion she knew she could entirely depend upon, and bade her in all haste seek out her uncle Paul, wherever he might be—aye, even within the doors of a Protestant temple, and to tell him Margaret entreated, on her bended knees, that he would come that instant to his brother, who at that moment stood in greater need of him than he ever did before, or, perhaps, ever would again. "Do not forget my words, good Catharina," continued Margaret, impressively; "you will be a guardian angel in our hour of greatest need if you exe-

cute this commission faithfully. Go: wait not to throw your *faille* around you; run, make all the haste you can. Your questions I cannot answer, but be assured you never did me such good service—fly!"

Obeying this hasty, and, as she thought, most wild command, but implicitly trusting her young mistress, whom she thought blessed with the beauty of angels and the wisdom of sages, the old woman hurried from the door with a quick, firm step, that could scarcely have been thought to belong to age. Margaret watched for a moment with eager eyes her swift gait, then with a lighter heart returned to the room where her absence had been unperceived, except by Lopez Chievosa, whose eye was full upon her as she re-entered. The mother was urging with all the ardour of an affection, cemented by years, the course her daughter had proposed, no other suggesting itself that afforded any chance of immediate escape, which, after all, as she said, was the chief and most desirable object.

After a long debate, in which Lopez and Margaret remained neuter, but in which Mary tried by turns entreaties, persuasions, and reproaches —all the simple eloquence that flowed from her loving heart, and by which he had more than once been almost vanquished, Cornelius turned to Chievosa:

"Do you think Paul might save them and me?"

Chievosa looked embarrassed.

"I can scarcely say. It is not right to put such a question to me. I cannot be supposed to be a fair judge upon a point of so much delicacy, for, lost or saved, once in his hands Margaret is lost to me for ever."

"I honour this candid admission," said Cornelius; "but I see in your face your real thoughts on this subject. I do not the less understand them for your not daring to speak them out. No! I will not apply to my brother," he continued, with a firmness he seldom displayed. "You assure me, Lopez, my wife and daughter are quite safe? Let the worst befal me, I shall know how to bear it like a Christian. An application to Paul would inevitably involve them."

"But we would gladly endure all things to save you, or be with you," said Mary.

"Enough of this, if you would not embitter the few hours I may yet have to spend with you. I repose all confidence in Lopez. I cannot trust by halves, and can never believe he would betray one who so implicitly relies on him."

"Your brother could not save you," said the Spaniard, coolly; and Margaret felt chilled and wounded by this reply to her father's honest effusion.

"Let us then to business," said Cornelius. "You say, Lopez, I shall return to my family, and I believe you. If you deceive me—— But come, help me to conceal the contents of my treasury, which I thought known to none but Paul and me."

"If I have surprised your secrets, it was with a son's feelings that I did so. I am ready."

"You must both attend me," said Van Meeren to his wife and daughter. "God alone knows who may be the survivor; the secret must die with us four, but it is fair that those whom it chiefly concerns should be well acquainted with it. And so, Lopez," he continued, whilst leading the

way to his once busy but now deserted office, "you absolutely cannot tell me when the dreaded event may be expected?"

"No," said the young man. "It may be months hence, or the very next hour."

They now crossed the room, but lately so neat and full of business, where Cornelius had spent so many hours of his life with his brother. The desk at which he wrote, his stool, the large silver watch that always lay beside his inkstand—a clock in size, though considered in those days a remarkable specimen of neat workmanship—all were there in their accustomed places; he alone—the repulsed brother, was missing.

The room had already, in a few short weeks, assumed that cold, forlorn, uninhabited appearance that comes so rapidly in the absence of daily occupation. It might have been thought that the moment was not one in which Cornelius could have been impressed with this; but, grave as his pre-occupation really was, none of the small party felt it more deeply than he. It struck a chill to his very heart. It was almost with childish awe that Margaret and her mother, for the first time in their lives, and that at such time, entered the mysterious chamber. The door was soon fastened behind them, and the spoliation of the secret drawers, never before profaned by a stranger's hand, progressed rapidly under the Spaniard's superintendence.

Mistress Van Meeren and her daughter knew themselves rich before; but the glittering treasures they here saw displayed surpassed what they had ever dreamed of. As the astonished mother saw drawer after drawer appear, and its golden contents emptied into the large iron casket which Chievosa had brought from his own room for the purpose, a remembrance of the ambitious dreams she had once so confidently entertained with regard to her own heiress, came back to her mind; and a fresh pang of disappointment oppressed her. But the sight of all this gold only made Margaret's heart sick. She thought how vain was man's toil and even his success—how vain were all his plans to ensure happiness! She hated that wealth which Chievosa had by a few words taught her to consider as the cause of all their present affliction.

When the iron box, which was by no means of small dimensions, was at last filled, it was carefully closed, and the key taken out of the lock to be concealed in the spot where the chest was to be deposited. Cornelius then desired his daughter to examine the next apartments and the staircases, that no prying eyes might witness their next movements.

After the first momentary surprise at the sight of so much wealth had subsided, Margaret saw its removal from the drawers with a vacant eye. Her thoughts were far from the scene in which she played her passive part. She felt that nervous irritability and impatience natural to an active mind when unable to make its resources available. There must be a thousand means of escape, each more worth attempting she thought, than thus calmly submitting to a threatened danger as if it were an accomplished fact; and although she could not have named one of those many chances, she firmly relied upon the ingenuity of her uncle Paul to point them out, and on his powers of argument to persuade her father to embrace them.

It was, therefore, with considerable anxiety about the return of her aged emissary that she glided from the room upon the mission with which she was intrusted. She soon, however, became aware that there was yet no

sign of the approach of her whose presence she so much desired, and she was fain to find comfort in the reflection that a sufficient time had not yet elapsed for the possible consummation of her wishes. She would not look at the huge clock that decorated the staircase, fearing lest she might find this computation erroneous; but casting a more observant eye around she ascertained that the house contained no other inmates but those who composed their own small party.

This was now a circumstance of frequent occurrence, for the timorousness of Cornelius had caused him to suspect his attendants one after another, and thus, under a pretence of restricted means, he had gradually curtailed his establishment. The few that remained Margaret had contrived to dismiss on various errands, the frequent passings to and fro, necessitated by her collecting all her valuables and those of her mother from the various repositories where they were kept, enabling her to effect this in such a manner as to avoid suspicion.

Having assured the expecting party of the satisfactory result of these measures, they now set forth in earnest on their expedition, in which they met with no sort of hindrance. Scarcely had they re-ascended to their ordinary sitting apartment, when the acute ear of the young girl caught the sound of the house-door cautiously opening and as cautiously closing again, to which succeeded the well-known footsteps of her old nurse on the stairs. The moment of suspense was one of agony to Margaret. She was about to rise to quit the apartment when the door slowly opened, and the old woman made her appearance.

"Master Paul is from home," she said, her feeble sight not enabling her to notice her foster child's repeated signals for caution. "He went away suddenly this very morning at daybreak, and is not expected to return for some weeks."

Without observing the astonishment which her words excited, the old crone left the room. Involuntarily, when she heard her secret instructions thus carelessly revealed, Margaret's eyes sought those of the Spaniard; it was not a premeditated glance, but the smile that curled his lip on hearing of her disappointment, struck and fixed her attention. Slight as the indication was it awoke a new train of thoughts, or, it might be better said, revived suspicions that had never been well laid to rest.

No one commented on Margaret's bold measure or reproached her for it; her disappointment was evidently shared by her parents: an embarrassing pause ensued, which was broken by Chievosa, who said he would go forth to see if he could collect fresh information on the all-engrossing subject.

Chapter XXVI.

As the house-door closed behind Chievosa a melancholy feeling of forlornness came over the little party. Paul absent—their best friends fled or incarcerated—their own liberty and safety compromised, and their confidence in their only comforter in the hour of need, not so steadfast as it had formerly been—how bleak were their prospects! This they all three felt, although they felt it differently.

The husband and wife stood hand in hand before the hearth that, for a series of years, had been to them an altar of unallayed happiness. By its side had all their joys bloomed—their hearts warmed with increas-

ing affection for each other; under its ample canopy were those confidences of the day begun which ended behind the heavy curtains of the conjugal bed. The bright rays of its fires had, year after year, cast their glow upon the increasing loveliness of their child. Now how great was the change, as they gazed mechanically into its darkened cavity, tears stealing slowly down their cheeks! Would they ever sit again by that once cheerful hearth with light hearts and merry spirits as of yore? Would fate permit their dearest wish to be accomplished—would they end their days on the spot where Cornelius's existence and Mary's happiness began? They in vain questioned their boding hearts—they could but tremble and weep.

Margaret united much of her uncle's spirit and resolution to some natural touch of caution, and that hopefulness which is the very nature and essence of youth—its greatest charm and stay—a quality which never gives way but to a recurrence of calamities and disappointments, or to a baneful and artificial state of mind. She was, therefore, far less desponding than her parents; and was rapidly turning over in her mind a series of plans by which to insure her father's escape from the impending danger, for she could not bring herself to rely, implicitly, on Chievosa's assurances of safety and of ultimate succour.

Before, however, the thoughts of any one of the three had clothed themselves in words, a heavy tread was heard on the stairs, announcing to the afflicted family a most welcome interruption, let the visitor be who he might.

Their momentary suspense was changed to joy when Van Diest stood before them, his riding costume and dusty appearance testifying how lately he had been on the road. His countenance bore an expression very unusual to it; and the Van Meerens felt assured that he either knew of the misfortune which threatened them, or was about to encounter a similar one. The first word he spoke confirmed this conjecture.

"I hope I may not be too late," exclaimed the honest burgher, avoiding his ordinarily verbose greetings. But hist! Where's the Spaniard?"

"He is just gone out," answered Mistress van Meeren. "Is your business with him?"

"Jesu Maria!" exclaimed Van Diest, with a movement of disgust. "Not with him certainly. It is a lucky chance that has sent him out of the way; for it is *of* him, not *to* him, that I would speak."

"Indeed!" said Margaret, eagerly.

"Yes," continued Van Diest, approaching the husband and wife, and speaking in so low a tone that in order to hear what he said the family were forced to group around him; "I am but just off my horse—arrived this minute from Brussels—did not even ride home or stable Cornelia—left her with the first honest neighbour I met hard by your door. I have ridden so hard that my very bones ache, and all to be in time to put you on your guard against—against——"

"Lopez Chievosa?" said Margaret, impatient of Van Diest's manner of introducing the subject.

"How came you by that?" exclaimed the worthy newsmonger in great astonishment.

"Never mind how she came by it," said Mistress van Meeren; "but tell us quickly what you mean?"

"Ay, it touches us nearly," said Cornelius, whose voice was husky with recent emotion, although at sight of his old neighbour he had tolerably well mastered it; but though signs of disquietude were visible in every face, Van Diest's usually observant eye marked them not, his own inward trepidation not allowing him to be conscious of that of others. "It is inconceivable how you should have become aware of it," he continued. "True, Master Paul had always a vague mistrust of him; but a certainty, and such a certainty, good God! how little any of us could have imagined!"

"Well, what is it? what do you mean?" demanded Mistress van Meeren, impatiently.

"You cannot tell us too quickly," added Margaret, "he may come back every minute."

"True," said Cornelius; "and I should be sorry if he heard any of our friends maligning him at the present moment."

"Malign! Holy Virgin! you call that maligning?"

"Well, speak out, we entreat," said Margaret.

Van Diest gradually assumed a look fraught with mystery and importance, for a sudden recollection of the Spaniard's threats put a check upon his communicative mood; it caused an awkward pause, during which he turned over in his own mind the best means of giving his friends a timely warning without betraying himself.

"Speak man!" said Cornelius, whose nerves were much shaken, "if you have anything to say that it may be useful to hear; if not——"

"Why, you see, Cornelius," said Van Diest, irresolutely, "I wish to do the friendly thing by you; but, still, the risks may be so great. However, if you promise to keep both my visit and my advice a perfect secret, especially from Chievosa; if I were assured of your discretion——"

No one replied. Sorrow and anxiety asserted their rights too powerfully in the bosom of every individual present to leave room for any curiosity, and Van Diest's lengthened prologue caused the interest his first words had excited to die away. Even Mistress van Meeren was so absorbed in grief as to become aware, for the first time in her life, that though a well-meaning, Van Diest was a tiresome personage; but, as he persisted in waiting for solicitation, Cornelius at length spoke:

"As to our silence, you may make yourself quite easy on that head. But if you do not wish to be found here by Chievosa, you had better be brief."

"Well," said Van Diest, "for the sake of your safety, and out of the great friendship I bear you, I will tell you this much: I have ascertained, beyond all doubt, that this Lopez Chievosa—this Spaniard—this favourite of yours, my good Mistress van Meeren—your intended husband, my poor Greta—this man is a false traitor, a knave, a villain! that every honest Fleming should kick out of his doors, and one that will bring destruction on you if you fly not from him in time."

"What do you mean?" said Cornelius, with an alarmed look.

"What proof can you give of so foul an accusation?" asked his wife, impetuously.

"Oh! I'm better informed than you fancy," replied Van Diest.

"What do you think of this by way of proof? You are to be shortly arrested by the Inquisitors of the Faith! This is but too sure a fact, Master van Meeren, though I am sorry to be the first to break such bad news to you."

"You are not the first," said Mistress van Meeren, moodily; "Chievosa has been beforehand with you, and has warned us himself."

"Wife—wife! but that we speak to a true friend, I should chide your imprudence. You know how desirous was Lopez that we should speak of this to no one."

"He told you this himself!" said Van Diest, incredulously. "Nay, that is because he knew I would, and thought it best to be beforehand with the news."

"Then he knew you were possessed of his secret or secrets?" inquired Margaret, earnestly.

"Why—yes," answered Van Diest, hesitatingly.

"If that be all you have to say," muttered Mistress van Meeren, "it is not enough to shake our trust in our only supporter and counsellor at this dreadful crisis. It proves nothing against him."

"We ought not, indeed, to let our confidence be shaken on slight grounds; you, doubtless, overheard him mentioning a threatened arrest," said Cornelius, who was well aware of his friend's peculiarities, "or others informing him of this event, and on this doubtful circumstance, which, after all, can easily be explained away, you have founded your suspicions."

This was too near the truth for Van Diest to deny it; and not being willing to betray himself further, he remained silent.

"He assures me," continued Cornelius, "it is but a passing cloud; that no eventual harm will result from it to me or mine. I am fain to believe him; for I do not see what he could gain by deceiving me, who have ever been a friend, and am quite willing to become a father to him."

"God forbid you should ever call such a violent, treacherous scoundrel your son! Do not trust your innocent child to him, Cornelius; believe me, I speak from no sort of spite or ill-blood against him, but out of sheer kindness to you."

"I doubt it not,—I doubt it not," said Cornelius, warmly grasping his old friend's hand. "God knows I trust you implicitly, but I really cannot make up my mind to mistrust Lopez."

"And there you are right, my dear husband," said his wife; "depend upon it my woman's shrewdness could not thus deceive me, and I would stake my own life on Lopez's honesty."

Margaret could not help thinking that womanly shrewdness spoke a very different language in different bosoms; for at the very first words of Van Diest, all her but half-lulled suspicions of Chievosa's real character were roused into tenfold strength, and she could not understand the entire reliance of her parents upon one whom all others seemed to regard with distrust.

"I cannot myself make out Chievosa's motives for betraying you," said Van Diest; "but that he does play you false is a point on which my belief is settled. God grant you do not become aware of this too late!"

"You are not the first who have entertained doubts of him," replied

Cornelius. "But I truly believe others, as well as yourself, judge too much from appearances, and perhaps a little, also, from prejudice. His being a Spaniard, is, I conceive, his chief fault."

"Not with me, I assure you," said Van Diest. "I know many of that nation to whom I would intrust life and fortune. It is not the nation that I object to, but the individual; and you would do well to take warning from my words. If others have warned you of the same danger, why you have all the better reason to believe me. What so many assert cannot be far wide of the truth."

"It is not sufficient to mistrust Chievosa," said Margaret; "how to escape from him and the inquisition. Have you no counsel to give us on that head?"

"To you, my pretty one," replied the burgher, "my chief counsel lies herein. Give not your heart or your hand to one of whom you know so little, but keep both to bless some honest Fleming, when times are more settled. I repeat my caution to you all—Beware of Chievosa! As to any apprehension of immediate violence, I think you scarce need entertain it, for I have heard for a surety that our gracious regent has promised—in writing, too—that all prosecution in matters of religion shall cease until such a time as the king shall otherwise decide; and as Count Brederode is in Antwerp at present, it is not likely that the promise given to him will be violated in a hurry."

"There is some hope in that," said Margaret, joyfully.

"And if we have but a few days before us, I can, perhaps—always using the greatest caution—find means of getting you aboard a boat bound for the English or the Norway coast. 'Twere no difficult matter for trusty people; and if you be careful and wise enough not to let your valued friend Chievosa into the secret, may be we might manage your escape before any one could interfere to prevent it."

Now, though the parents would fain persuade themselves that their trust in their Spanish friend was firm, still they involuntarily felt how much more advantageous would be an immediate relief from their apprehensions than any chances of after-succour. They, therefore, embraced this idea with no less eagerness than their daughter, and promised Van Diest the secrecy he desired with regard to Chievosa, at the same time that they poured out their grateful thanks for his well-timed offers of service. He replied to their warm expressions of gratitude:

"Wait until you are safe at Master Sturgeon's, and then you will owe me something which it will be very easy for you to pay."

"How?" exclaimed Margaret, eagerly. "Tell us but how, and you will not find us backward in cancelling so great a debt."

"The way lies in your own hands, my dear young friend," said Van Diest, turning a kind but grave look towards Margaret; "and it will be, believe me, the greatest obligation you can confer upon me, and benefit upon yourself—break off from this Spaniard for ever."

"That is not so easily done as said," murmured, in soft, full tones, a well-known voice; and, turning round, the startled auditors perceived Lopez Chievosa standing on the threshold of the door, whose opening, in the eagerness of their conversation, they had not heeded.

"I cannot say, my worthy Master van Diest, that I feel much indebted to you for the language you hold to my promised bride, nor do I think you act wisely or honestly in so doing."

Though the Spaniard's voice was calm, his dark eyes shot flames as he spoke, and his lip quivered with suppressed emotion.

At first, all parties looked confused and guilty, and they became still more so when they remembered how much Chievosa might have overheard of what they had designed to conceal. Chievosa was the first to break silence.

"I hope," said he, turning to Margaret, "you are too prudent to suffer your judgment to be misled. I should, perhaps, have more grace in saying, I trust your heart is too kindly inclined towards me to permit the insinuations of a professed scandal-monger—such as this idle gossip—to make an impression on your mind. You do not answer me, Margaret; nay, I respect your modesty"—and a sarcastic smile played for a moment round his mouth, imparting to it an expression of unutterable scorn, which gave way to a frown of deadly hatred, as he glanced at Van Diest—"I respect your modesty, but let me give you, too, a caution—consort not with fools, lest their folly infect you. For you, Master van Diest, I should scarcely have thought you would have crossed my path again so soon. It seems decreed, however, that we should not be friends, although the quarrel is of your own seeking."

"I seek neither quarrel nor friendship with you," said Van Diest, resolutely enough.

"No!" replied Chievosa, in a tone of bitter raillery; "no; you seek not a fair open quarrel, but, by slander and backbiting, you seek to deprive me of my best treasure—to debar me from all prospects of future happiness—to make of me a hopeless, desperate man; and this misery you seek to bring on another—not from any manly motive or passion—not through jealousy or rivalry—that I could understand—but you do all this from the most contemptible of impulses—the love of gossip and national prejudice!"

"You are mistaken," answered Van Diest, firmly. "I am influenced in my actions by nothing but the purest friendship towards this family; nor do I heed your existence, except it be in reference to them. And be persuaded, you can neither shame nor frighten me out of these feelings."

At this moment, a low but continuous knocking at the house door arrested the attention of those within. It had been long before the deaf nurse would have replied to these quiet summons, and Chievosa, at the request of Mistress van Meeren, who was eager to put an end to so painful a discussion, descended, to ascertain what could cause this unusual interruption at so late an hour, for dusk was rapidly increasing. Van Diest, though unbidden, followed, as if suspicious of his movements; and, after the expiration of a few seconds, he re-entered the apartment, pale and breathless with terror.

"Hide me! hide me, for the Virgin's sake!" he exclaimed. "The Inquisitors of the Faith are behind me! Conceal me somewhere—anywhere!"

But the consternation which his words sent to every heart prevented his request being heeded. Though prepared for the shock, or at least imagining themselves to be so, yet the reality came with a suddenness upon them which scattered their composure to the winds: they had not been aware before how much of this feeling was due to hope. Their grief was too much mingled with terror to be loud; but so intense was it that every other sentiment faded before it. Van Diest was as much forgotten

as though he had never been: his clamours died away on their ears whilst they counted, with painful accuracy, the sounds of the many footsteps ascending the narrow stairs. Van Diest, too, was fully alive to their approach; and opening with a trembling hand a door opposite to that by which the inquisitors would enter, he bolted through it.

Urged on by instinct—for his fit of alarm was such as to deprive him of all power of reasoning—Van Diest darted up a private staircase leading from the back room, through a trap, to the second floor, and never stopped until he reached an attic chamber, evidently belonging to a menial. Finding it tenantless, he unceremoniously entered, when, breathless, panting with his exertions, for he was by no means accustomed to such rapidity of motion and intensity of feeling, he sunk upon a wooden trunk in the corner of the small room, where he was compelled to remain until his breath and consciousness should in some measure return.

In the mean time, the apartment from which he had so hurriedly departed had been slowly filled with men, whose dark cloaks and slouched hats were adjusted in such a manner as to conceal their countenances, and who pressed silently towards the afflicted occupants, like the fitful figures of a dream.

The affectionate wife and daughter clung to Cornelius as if determined that nothing but force should separate them from him; but they, too, were speechless; for, to implore the pity of their dreaded visitors was, they well knew, to ask glad springs to flow from the arid sands of the desert. Chievosa advanced like an angel of light from among the dark, phantom-like forms, whose outlines were but barely visible in the evening light.

"Bear up, my friends," he said, in his most cheerful tones; "a little patience, and some trust in me, will enable you to get through this affair much better than you imagine. I assure you, common report makes of it a far more awful affair than it really is. When you return unscathed to your home, you will make light of this trying hour."

"Shall I ever return?" said Cornelius, sinking his voice to a timid whisper, but which the silence in the room rendered distinctly audible.

"Trust to me," said Chievosa, with an air of self-reliance that greatly consoled the afflicted family; "you see these gentlemen are not so uncourteous as they are reported to be; they are willing, at my request, to use no sort of personal compulsion towards you. If you but consent to follow quietly whither they will lead, I'll answer for it no harm will happen to you. Where resistance is useless, it is wise to submit with good grace. They are now going to put their seals on everything in the house, that, in case you should be found guilty, they may confiscate your property for the king's benefit. If you do not feel able to go through the painful task of accompanying them, I will take this duty upon myself."

"In God's name do it," said Cornelius. "My poor head is confused—I feel sick at heart."

"Well, I will prevail on them not to molest you during my absence—you see how very far from hostile are my intentions towards you."

"May Heaven reward you for this kindness, I cannot," said Cornelius, deeply moved. "You stay by me when others would fly from me to the world's end."

Chievosa, having interchanged a few words with the person who seemed to act as chief to the mysterious party, that individual bowed almost sub-

missively, and, headed by Chievosa, he and his followers left the room; but it was evident that some remained posted before the door as sentinels, to cut off all possibility of escape for those within. It was impossible to doubt the good intelligence that existed between the Spaniard and these men; a circumstance that greatly added to the misgivings of Margaret, whilst it filled the bosoms of her parents with renewed hope. Their tears, however, flowed copiously at the thought of their approaching separation, nor did they even venture to contemplate the eventual misery that might ensue, well knowing such thoughts would increase tenfold the anguish of the moment.

When Chievosa and the men returned, their absence had been so protracted that lights were necessary, which they themselves had found means to provide. When the flambeaux first flashed on the mournful trio, their glare revealed not only the marks of sorrow on their countenances, but exhibited also very unequivocal signs of anger and disappointment in the faces of those who bore them. It was easy to understand the reason of this change. They had found no trace whatever of that wealth for which Cornelius was famed, and which had doubtless been the chief aim of so bold a measure at so unpropitious a moment. Margaret distinctly heard one of the men mutter in Spanish:

"Now the golden eggs are flown, what is the use of burdening ourselves with the hen?"

"To teach her how to recover them," answered another.

And Margaret made up her mind to sacrifice all that might ever be hers to save her father, but she determined to wait for competent advice before proceeding in a matter of so much delicacy. It was easy to perceive that Chievosa stood no longer so high in the esteem of these menials of the inquisition as heretofore. They now regarded him with distrust, evidently considering him as the main cause of their disappointment. Of this Margaret became convinced, when she heard the leader say to the object of their suspicion:

"We made all the haste we could to be beforehand with you, but it seems we are yet too late. You are very quick, senhor."

Chievosa made no reply; and again Margaret grew perplexed, and lost all clue to his conduct.

After some further discussion, conducted in so low a tone that Margaret could not distinguish a single word, Chievosa turned to Cornelius, and announced to him that, out of consideration for himself, and to avoid unnecessary scandal, the inquisitors were willing to make a great exception in his favour; they would allow his family to remain in, and retain possession of their house, until he should be either acquitted or condemned. They did not deem it necessary to put their seals on anything, so little of any value being in the way; but any selling, or otherwise removing of effects, of whatever character or denomination, would be construed into an actual infringement of the fiscal rights, and resented accordingly. He further added, that out of private and extraordinary commiseration, the men were willing not to embitter their parting scene by their presence, but would retire until he should call them to remove the prisoner.

"If you really be a friend to us," said Mistress van Meeren, the moment that, at a sign from Chievosa, the men had withdrawn, "obtain for me permission to accompany my husband to share whatever hardships may be in store for him. Margaret will never lack friends in Antwerp

to protect her. Do this, and I shall bless your name morning and night in my prayers, and think you the truest friend I ever had."

"I will follow my parents," exclaimed Margaret.

"That which you request is beyond my power to obtain, nor do I think it a very desirable boon," replied Lopez, with a peculiar smile.

"Nay," said Margaret, moving towards the door with a rapid step; "I shall try my power then."

"Unhappy girl, what are you about to do?" said the Spaniard, as with a few hasty strides he stood beside her, and laid a firm grasp upon her arm, which she vainly strove to shake off.

"Let me go, I entreat," implored the young girl, perceiving the fruitlessness of her efforts to free herself.

"Margaret is right," said the mother, in her turn; "if there be danger we will share it with him. I will see if these men will listen to reason."

"Are you mad, Master Cornelius?" exclaimed the Spaniard, in the greatest agitation. "Are you distraught, that you stand by and see your wife and daughter seek their ruin?"

Cornelius gazed for a moment steadfastly on the young man.

"It is, then, as I thought," said he, mournfully. "Mary—Margaret, I command you to stay. Do you hear me? I order you to my side!"

The habit of obedience was so deeply rooted in the bosoms of both, that Margaret and her mother instinctively returned, though with slow and reluctant steps, to Cornelius, who, taking the hand of each within his own, said, impressively:

"Until now you have never given me the slightest sorrow. You have both been the light, the joy of my existence. Do not, I entreat, in the bitterest hour of my life, add to its pangs. Do not make my sad heart sadder, and take away from me the only stay, the only hope that I shall know in these days of trial. My only comfort now will be to think that you, at least, are safe. If you love me, prove it by obeying my injunctions and desires in all things. My first command is, that you remain peacefully here until you hear from me, or, if such may not be, until my brother's return. To his care do I commit you both, and, above all, to the care of Him who never deserts the innocent. Will you give me the promise of implicit obedience which alone can cheer my afflicted spirit?"

Rising sobs stifled the answers of those whom he addressed, but the silent pressure of their hands sufficiently expressed their readiness to obey.

"Dear ones, my blessing rest upon your heads; and, should we never meet again in this world——"

"Nay, nay; you must not speak or think thus," said Chievosa; "but in all cases you had better prepare everything for the possible chance of a long absence from home. That I speak and act in your interest you must be, by this time, perfectly aware. What motive, indeed, could urge me to any but a friendly course towards you? Were you not willing—nay, urgent—for a speedy union between your only child and myself? Were you not the champion of my hopes? Have I not, at great personal risks, given you timely warning, and prepared you for this calamity? You see my advice was good, and I shall soon have it in my power to serve you more efficiently. Listen, then, to my counsel; entrust your house, your worldly treasures, and those who are far dearer

to you, wholly to my care. They shall be a sacred deposit, and given back to you unharmed in deed or word. But to bid those you leave behind to seek your brother at a crisis like this, is at once sealing your own doom, and perhaps theirs. If you really wish to secure their safety, and all which belongs to you—if you would be assured of their fate and yours—then sanction the speedy fulfilment of a long-made promise. Let the event take place in your absence that will make me the happiest of men. Bid Margaret bless me with her hand within as short a time as may be, that I may have a right to protect her and you as I may desire. You are a father, Master Cornelius, and a loving one; urge your daughter to embrace an opportunity of procuring for herself such absolute security. We may now look forward to times when unprotected females will encounter greater perils than those threatened by the inquisition. I speak for her sake as well as mine; for, frankly, Master Cornelius, to love and friendship I am willing to sacrifice much; but if it be to meet with no better return than distrust, and perhaps a final rejection—if I am to be thrown aside like a worthless tool when my task is done—you cannot expect that I should be willing to abandon friends, home, the pleasures and pursuits of my rank, for such a result."

"Ungenerous—unfeeling!" murmured Margaret. "To speak of this at such a time!"

"It is because moments are precious," said Chievosa, "that I lay the whole truth before your father whilst he is yet able to decide. You, Margaret, cannot, or will not, feel that these are times when maidenly caprice should be set aside—that we have no time to throw away on all the delightful embarrassments of a protracted courtship, when death and disgrace may knock at the door every hour."

"Chievosa speaks but the truth, my child," said Cornelius, who had first listened with deep attention, and then with a gradually increasing eagerness, to the Spaniard's address. "You are yet too young and too inexperienced to feel how correct is the view that Lopez takes of the future. Besides, dearest Greta, he has been devoted to you for years, has proved himself a friend to us in the hour of danger, and is yet willing to become my deliverer—your guardian. Surely it were madness and ingratitude to refuse any longer to fulfil an engagement entered into in more cheerful hours. All mists of distrust must vanish from every honest mind while listening to his words. Come, Margaret, concede to my wishes in this one further instance; you may never have to obey me again. There, Lopez, is her hand; I give her to you, and enjoin her to trust and submit to you in all things, as she has hitherto done to me. Margaret, I require of you that you get a priest to sanction your union as speedily as possible, and my blessing shall not be wanting even from afar. Mary, see that my will be obeyed. I doubt not my child's readiness to comply with my desires; but it is your province to see those desires enforced, should she be reckless and ingrate enough to hesitate after so formal a command. Mary, you at least will never grieve me. I know you will see to this for our child's sake; and accept my best thanks, dearest, now, for all the enduring love and kindness you have borne me through life. Should I not be able to thank you again here below, I shall remember it above, from whence my blessing shall ever rest on you until we meet again."

As he spoke, he folded his weeping wife in his arms, and seemed for-

getful of all else but the pang of parting. At last he tore himself from her, and received his daughter's embrace. Her sorrow was not vehement, but she felt as if her heart was breaking.

"Promise, Margaret—promise," he whispered in her ear.

"Anything, father, to please or soothe you," was the scarcely audible reply.

"Lopez Chievosa, I entrust to you my dearest pledges. Let happen what will, to me be a son—a husband to them; and may God deal with you as you deal with the confidence I repose in you. The trust of an honest man and a true Christian, young man, is a thing too sacred to be trifled with."

Chievosa, in his turn, received a fatherly embrace from Cornelius. The next instant the impatient familiars were within the chamber, and, to avoid the prolongation of the painful scene, Cornelius, clasping his rosary firmly in his hands, followed them from the room without casting another glance on the fainting figure of his wife, whom Chievosa supported in his arms, or on his scarcely more conscious daughter, who had sunk upon her knees.

THE UNMATCHED SOUP.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

In one of those dingy courts in the City, which I never enter without a strange feeling as though I were being squeezed, so obnoxious do they look to anything at all wide or free, so prison-like are they in their aspect, so associative of thin bodies and narrow minds—in one of these dismal localities, many years ago, stood the dining-house of old Jeremy Brand. The dining business had been carried on there from time immemorial (Jeremy had it forty years), and at the period of which we speak a most extensive business it was. In all probability there were very few houses in the City at that time where so much money was taken as at Jeremy's. And why was this? Not because the dining-room was a nice one, for it was as dark and as dirty as it could well be—nor was it on account of the viands generally, for though they would pass muster, they were not particularly commendable, and certainly could not claim credit for attracting the number of visitors who daily satisfied their appetites at "Old Jeremy's." It was mainly on account of Jeremy's soup—his perfectly unrivalled soup of all kinds, which he sold, too, at a very moderate charge, that Jeremy had such a superb share of custom. Everybody who went to Jeremy's had soup, and everybody vowed that such soup as that soup they had never tasted before, and, probably, should never taste elsewhere again.

Now Jeremy had been solicited by all sorts of people, and he had been offered large sums, to reveal the secret as to how he made this soup. *His* mock-turtle—*his* ox-tail—*his* gravy, were quite unlike what were obtained elsewhere. There was a peculiar flavour about them, a richness, an enticingness, that no cook out of Jeremy's could achieve; and intense was the desire on the part of the best cooks in London to

ascertain the concealed method by which Jeremy was enabled to arrive at the wonderful result exhibited in that unmatched soup, the praises of which were so frequently and gallingly sung in the ears of irritated competitors. But Jeremy was firm. That secret, he said, he never would divulge: his pocket would be injured and his pride hurt by that soup, that now could only be obtained in Undertaker's Court, being to be purchased all over the town. And what was more, Jeremy's cooks seemed to share their master's feelings, for though mighty bribes had been offered to them to tell the mystery, they were likewise unmoved, and to all appearance immovable; and so it was that at this time Jeremy's secret was locked up in the breasts of some four individuals—his business was greater than ever, and his wealth day by day grew and increased in a manner wonderful to behold.

But this marvellous prosperity could not be expected to last for ever. An evil day was at hand. One of the villanous-looking old cooks who was entrusted with the making of the matchless soup, fell in love with Jeremy's pretty housemaid, who, though she hated the miserable old fellow, for a certain purpose pretended warmly to return his affection. Mary was, in reality, engaged to the son of a tavern-keeper in the neighbourhood, and the only bar to their union was one which, unfortunately, has very often existed—the bar of insufficient worldly goods to make matrimony a prudent proceeding. Under these circumstances Mary's wits were sharpened to discover some way of improving her pecuniary condition, and the first thing that struck her was that there was a secret the possession of which would be equal in value to a little fortune. True, there was every reason to believe that old Jonathan had never in the very slightest degree divulged that secret to any human being, but there was no doubt of the venerable idiot being over head and years in love, and there was no doubt, either, that his silliness, in consequence, would exceed even the inordinate quantity invariably exhibited by persons in his melancholy situation. Well, then, she would set to work; and she did set to work, and, melancholy to relate, old Jonathan, who had withstood the most tempting offers of advantage of every kind to reveal the mystery of the soup—who had cast them all aside with scorn unspeakable—this hitherto faithful old servant was at last led into a shameful violation of confidence; after an agonising struggle between love and duty, love triumphed, and in a trembling voice he whispered the secret into the ears of his beloved Mary. But ah, mark the consequence! Conscience was soon busy, remorse quickly ensued, and that very night the wretched Jonathan, racked and tortured beyond endurance, walked from his bed to the kitchen, gazed long and lingeringly upon a quantity of that precious soup, with which he had been so proud to be identified, but the sight of which now drew from him moans inexpressibly sad and dismal, and then did something to himself with a carving-knife, which put an end straightway to his mortal career.

We need scarcely say that the marriage of the diabolical housemaid with the son of the tavern-keeper was not long taking place. They were quickly united; money was raised for the opening a dining-house, and business was commenced forthwith, in a locality not far from Jeremy's. Of course the first thing done was the publishing far and wide the possession, by the proprietors of the new dining-house, of the secret of Jeremy's soup; and in order to remove all doubts, the whole story (till

then withheld) as to the manner in which the secret had been obtained was likewise fully made public, and the circumstance of the ancient cook's tragical end was pointed to as confirmatory in great measure of its correctness. Jeremy went raving—his anger passed all bounds—he vowed he would have up the body of Jonathan and cut it into pieces—he rushed to the new dining-house, asked for the mistress, and on her appearing seized her by the throat and all but choaked her (for which feat, by-the-by, he would have suffered unpleasant pains and penalties, only his doctor certified to his having been labouring under a slight attack of delirium tremens), and then was so completely prostrated and cast down that he took to his bed and laid there for some weeks. Meanwhile, a division existed among his old customers. Many had tried the new dining-house, and declared that its soup was at least equal, if not superior, to Jeremy's; while many, on the other hand, contended that Jeremy's soup still maintained its clear and unquestionable superiority. This circumstance afforded some consolation to Jeremy. All was not lost. His house might yet regain its position. If he could only get a decided majority of his customers to decide that, after all, there was no soup like his, he might by-and-by insinuate afresh that the revelation of the secret by Jonathan was only a made-up story, and thus the time would, in all probability, return when men would own that Jeremy was still triumphant, and that in the concoction of soup he and his assistants might still look down upon all the world. This idea cheered the old man; he grew better—he got well—he was about again, and day by day he was greeted with friendly smiles and encouraging words; and day by day was his hand shaken by multitudes, who declared their continued belief that his mock-turtle and his ox-tail were unequalled, and could not be equalled. At length it seemed as though Jeremy's opponents were falling into a bad way. They made solemn affirmation that precisely as soup was manufactured at Jeremy's, so was it made at their house; they reiterated the story as to how the secret had been obtained; they pointed afresh to the significant suicide of the unhappy Jonathan; still, even those who had supported them at the outset, now looked at them coldly and incredulously, and their visits grew fewer and fewer. At last one or two friends suggested that, as a final effort to convince the public that really and truly there was no difference between the soup—that theirs quite equalled Jeremy's, and that as their room was a much nicer one than Jeremy's, the balance of advantages was on their side—a grand challenge should be issued to Jeremy. It should be proffered to him to entertain a select number of customers one day, whom they should regale the next; and that on the third day a solemn gathering should take place, when judgment should be delivered as to which party's soup had been most exquisite, and thus the much-vexed and important question be finally set at rest.

The challenge was given, and, after some hesitation, it was accepted. Great was the excitement among the soup-loving public—intense the anxiety of the lovers of mock-turtle—indescribable the agitation of the adherents of ox-tail. The days were fixed, the guests were invited, they were men of surpassing appetites, yet of exquisite taste; an awful thing, indeed, would be their decision.

The first day—the day of Jeremy's entertainment—arrived.

In the early morning the youthful servant of Jeremy's married daugh-

ter, who had arrived two days before on a visit, having, as was her duty, immersed her mistress's baby in a basin of water (it was an infant of remarkably small dimensions), was occupied in rubbing the squalling little creature dry with a coarse towel. Suddenly the maiden started from her seat, placed the infant very unceremoniously in its cradle, and leaving the room, ran down stairs, and confronted Jabez Jolly, the remaining old cook (Jeremy would not have one in the place of Jonathan), who happened to be making his way to the soup-room.

"Please Mr. Jolly," said the little maiden, in her most persuasive tone, "do let me presently go and look at the soup."

Now it was against orders for Mr. Jolly to allow any one to enter the soup-room, and he at first refused; but he was a good-natured fellow (I think, somehow, that most people who are in the habit of eating first-rate soup *are* good-natured), and on witnessing the pain his refusal caused the maiden, he reversed his decision, and claiming a kiss as his reward, consented.

"Well, now, come at once," said Mr. Jolly.

"Oh, I can't come directly," replied Mary; "I've got the baby to dress."

"Then you can't come at all," returned Jolly, "for I daren't let you in in a quarter of an hour's time."

"Very well," said Mary, after a moment's hesitation; "I'll be with you in an instant."

She ran up stairs again. There lay the little infant naked in its cradle, screaming lustily. Its mother was very ill, and could not look to it, and no one else cared to inquire about it. Still, if left there, the wretched uproar it was making would bring some one to see what was the matter, and if it should be found lying naked and deserted, its attentive little nurse knew that she would be sent off straightway. On the other hand, if she waited until she had properly attired and fetched some one to take charge of it, she would lose the chance of a peep into the soup-room, which she was so curious to enter. Under these circumstances, Mary grasped the squalling infant, seized a blanket, enveloped it therein, and hastened down stairs to Mr. Jolly, who at once conducted her to the soup-room.

The girl ran in and gazed in utter amazement at the various huge vessels that stood around containing soup. There seemed a perfect ocean of soup; the sight took her very breath away. Presently she stood by a most mighty caldron, and timidly moving one of the immense ladles, brought into motion divers pieces of ox-tail, that might have reminded her of monsters making their appearance from the depths of the sea. The baby now laughed and crowed exceedingly, and wriggled about in the blanket to a dangerous extent, while the little maid let it rest (she could only herself just peep over) against the side of the cauldron as she stirred the contents. A lively infant it was, and it stretched its hands out delightedly, as though it were not without some notion of the beauty and the richness of the concoction on which it was gazing.

The youthful maiden must have remained thus occupied for a quarter of an hour or so; at the end of which time she was observed leaving the room, and subsequently the house, with some degree of precipitation, and looking as though she were not altogether easy in her mind.

By-and-by there was an outcry for the little servant and the baby. They were searched for high and low, and when it transpired that the former had left the house, but without the infant, considerable alarm was excited. Nevertheless, the preparations for the banquet proceeded in due course; they could not be interrupted or interfered with for the sake of any babies; and Jeremy, although vexed and uneasy when he heard what had occurred, was too busily occupied to dwell much upon the matter at that time.

The hour of dining was at hand; the guests had assembled; there was great commotion. Jabez Jolly was in a state of alarming excitement. Jeremy forgot the baby, forgot its mother—forgot everything save the important point which was ere long to be decided. One moment he was down in the soup-room, swearing at Jolly like a trooper; then he begged the old fellow's pardon with the utmost humility; afterwards he withdrew into his bedroom; and one of the waiters declared, on looking through the keyhole, he had seen him on his knees, doubtless praying for the triumph of his soup.

The hour came. Dinner was announced. The guests were marshalled with great ceremony into the highly decorated dining-room. On the table was such an array of mighty tureens—one of particularly gigantic dimensions occupying a prominent position at the top of the table—the eyes of the guests glistened, and Jeremy's heart beat violently. Places were taken, and Jeremy, having in his agitation given thanks instead of asking a blessing, the cover was removed from the huge tureen before mentioned, and the helping actively began.

"It looks first-rate," said the guest first helped, taking up his spoon.

"And tastes so, I'm sure, sir," answered Jeremy, as he helped away, with tears in his eyes from excessive emotion.

"Oh, the devil!"—"Oh hoo!"—"I be"—"Oh! oh!" shouted two or three who had taken their first spoonful at the same moment; and, springing from their seats, they sputtered the soup about the room.

Jeremy turned pale! Every one rose in alarm!

"What—what's the matter?" was the anxious inquiry on all sides.

"Taste and find," yelled the others.

Jeremy frantically took a huge spoonful. No sooner had it gone down his throat than he fell as if shot, and writhed like an eel being subjected to the skinning process. Directly after, however, he sprang to his feet, disappeared, and, in a moment returned, dragging in Jabez Jolly by the hair.

"Villain," shouted Jeremy—"murderer, assassin! you have poisoned the soup: own it, wretch, before we die."

The guests made a rush at the old cook, and as many as could grasped him with tiger-like ferocity.

"Ay, ay, villain, you have poisoned us," they screamed in concert.

"I haven't. Murder!" shouted Jabez.

"Run for a doctor," cried some; and immediately two or three ran for a doctor.

"And for a policeman," added others; and straightway a policeman was sent for.

"Make him drink some himself," said one.

The idea was immediately acted upon. Old Jolly was dragged to the table, and was compelled to swallow three table-spoonfuls. At the two

first he was so outrageous that it required the utmost strength of six furiously-indignant men to hold him; but at the third, he broke away from all of them, dashed into the street, and was only secured after he had, in a temporary fit of insanity, knocked down four men, three women and a child, and broken two large panes of glass in the window of Mr. Isaacs, the cheap tailor at the corner.

Almost directly old Jolly had disappeared a great uproar was heard without, and presently two police constables entered the room, dragging between them the little servant-girl who had vanished so mysteriously in the early part of the morning. She seemed in a state of sore affliction, and presented a most dismal aspect. The moment she saw Jeremy she sprang forward, and threw herself on her knees before him.

"Oh, Mr. Jeremy! Oh, sir!—oh, pray!" she exclaimed, weeping vociferously. "Oh, don't kill me—oh, don't; I couldn't help it. I couldn't, really—the poor baby!"

"What about it?" inquired the astonished Jeremy.

"Oh," she answered with a shiver, and a fresh burst of lamentation. "Oh, throw that soup away—oh, don't anybody drink that soup."

"What about the soup?" shouted every guest present.

"Oh, gentlemen!" cried the girl. "Oh, the baby!"

"What has the baby to do with the soup?" asked Jeremy, in a faltering voice, and turning very pale.

"Why, sir," began the girl; but then breaking off suddenly, she repeated most imploringly, "Oh, don't kill me."

"Devil take the girl!" cried Jeremy; "we are not murderers—we don't cut throats."

"But, sir—but the baby," stammered the girl. "I—I—wanted to look at the soup—and, sir, I couldn't go without taking the baby—and—oh, oh——"

"Go on," shouted Jeremy.

"Oh—yes—if you won't kill me—and so—and so I took—it—into—the soup-room—and I—had it wrapped up in a blanket—and as I was standing looking at the soup—the de—dear baby took a—a jump—and——"

"You don't mean to say it jumped into the soup?" shouted half-a-dozen voices.

"Ye-e-e-es—(oh, don't kill me!)—and I couldn't get it out—so I—I ran—away—and left it. Oh, you'll kill me, I know you will—oh, oh!"

Such a yell arose from Jeremy and the horror-stricken guests—there was such a rushing to the door, and such a close examination of the patterns of washhand basins for hours after.

So it was. It was not ox-tail, but baby-soup they had had before them. The poor little infant had been stewed—made soup of—the case was clear; upon a careful search they found remnants of the baby mingled with the pieces of ox-tail. Poor old Jeremy's business was settled; but as he had no business to be in business (considering his wealth), nobody much pitied him. He closed his shop the next day, and neither he nor any of his family were ever known to taste soup afterwards.

FLORENCE HAMILTON.

By Miss Julia Addison.

author of "the curate of wildmere."

Chapter XIII.

I sat me down more heavily opprest,
More desolate at heart, than e'er I felt
Before. Thompson.

When Miss Trimmer descended to the library she found no one there but Wentworth, who was standing by the window, in so deep a reverie that he did not perceive her entrance.

"Are you going tho thoon?" she commenced. "I have been bithy all the morning preparing my penthilth and brutheth to thketch out of doorth with you and Florenth. I regret leth that we are going to looth you to-day, becauth we are going to thpend the afternoon with the Mumfordth, very thtupid people, who dine at three o'clock, and are motth dreadful borth. Don't you hate thtupid people, Captain Wentworth; and don't you deteth dining at three o'clock?"

As she spoke, her attention was attracted by a large bouquet of choice flowers which lay on the table.

"Dear me, what a tharming bouquet!" she exclaimed, "and arranged with thuch tathte too! I alwayth think there ith immenth thcope for the dithplay of judthment and tathte in the arranthment of flowerth. Now, an artitht, Captain Wentworth, or one who painth like an artitht, hath a great advantage over thothe who have not thtudied painting. I think I can geth who thelected thethe flowerth?" she added, as, after bending down to smell them, she looked up at Wentworth. expecting a reply to her observations.

But Wentworth made none.

"Are thethe your choithe?" she asked, taking up the bouquet, and playfully holding it close to his face.

"I beg your pardon," said Wentworth, starting; "did you speak to me?"

"Thpeak to you, Captain Wentworth! Why I have been talking to you inthethantly thith latht quarter of an hour. But I am afraid I have interrupted your meditathonth."

"My meditations!" repeated Wentworth, with an air of abstraction.

"Yeth, your meditationth," repeated Miss Trimmer, pointedly. "You were loth in thought jutht now. I wath complimenting you upon your arranthment of thith bouquet."

"You must reserve your compliments for Sir Robert Craven," said Wentworth; "I had nothing to do with the bouquet."

"Indeed! Hath Thir Robert been here then?"

Not receiving any answer to this question, which, indeed, Wentworth did not seem to hear, she added, after a moment's pause,

"I have been withing all the morning for a moth-rothe. I could not go on the lawn to look for one ath the grath ith damp. I mutht try and find thome person kind enough to go for me. Do you know whether the grath ith damp, Captain Wentworth?"

"I am afraid—that is, I hope not," he answered, in an absent manner.

"Really," said Miss Trimmer to herself, "thith ith unbearable. Mithter Thilverdale would have brought me a dothen rotheth, and repeated half a page of poetry to each; and Mithter Pemberton would at leatht have had thome fun and taken notith of me in his pleathant way. I thought it better to begin with a little flattery. We will now protheed to bithneth. Talking of Thir Robert," she commenced, lowering her voice, and assuming a confidential air, "you are probably aware of the attathment exthithting between him and a thertain young lady not far dithtant." Observing that her auditor had suddenly become very attentive, she proceeded, "Which attathmenth ith encouraged by Lady Theagrove, who ith ath fond of Thir Robert ath if he were her own thon, and hath long meditated their union. Indeed, Lady Theagrove—but I dare thay you know all thith, do you not?"

"Lady Seagrove has never honoured me with her confidence on the subject," said Wentworth, changing colour, although he spoke with affected indifference.

"I am thurprithed," said Miss Trimmer, "that with your quickneth and penetrathon you have not dithcovered thith before. And yet," she continued, hesitating a little, as if she spoke with great reluctance—"and yet I am not thurprithed either, for, I regret to thay, that our dear Florenth, with all her merritth, ith a thad coquette, and it ith ecthtremely difficult for any one, even her motht intimate friendth, to know her real thenthiments, thinth the will often pretend one thing, whilth in reality the meanth quite the reverth."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Wentworth, with an energy of manner that quite startled Miss Trimmer.

"I athure you," she replied, mournfully, "it ith with great pain that I, who love Florenth like a thithter, breathe even the thlightest word about her that ith not unmicthed praithe. Indeed, I feel extremely thorry that I have thaid what I did, even to you; but, like other people of whothe nature truth and candour are the predominant featurth, I sometimth inadvertently thay thingth which I repent of afterwardth, tho pray, Captain Wentworth—I know that to thuch a friend of the family I thall not plead in vain—do pray promith that what I have thaid shall go no further—that you will even try to forget it yourthelf?"

A bend of the head was Wentworth's only reply to her last appeal.

"I have succeeded still better than I hoped or expected," she said to herself; "for I have certainly made him very uncomfortable."

Miss Trimmer was right; for Wentworth in vain endeavoured to persuade himself that Florence's intended marriage was a matter of indifference to him, or at least that he merely regretted on her own account that she should be united to a man who he thought would not make her happy.

He returned home very melancholy; and throwing himself on a sofa, remained for a long time unmindful of everything but his own thoughts. At last he started up, and resolved to employ himself, that he might not think any more. The clock of a neighbouring church had just struck four, and he determined to read until it should strike again; but though he kept his eyes fixed on the page before him, he could not command his attention, and the chiming of the next hour found him still pursuing the same train of harassing meditations. He closed the book without having

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the remotest idea of what he had been reading, and walked out into the street, without knowing where he was going.

On his return he found several letters lying on the table. Among these was one on pink-laced paper, written in a hand which appeared as if the writer had studied to make it illegible. It was enclosed in a delicate primrose-coloured envelope, and sealed with blue wax. On the seal was the figure of Cupid, with a bow in his hand, standing on a heart pierced by five or six arrows, with the motto, "Oh! amour trop cruel!" With considerable difficulty Wentworth deciphered the following:

"My dear Sir,—It is with immense reluctance that I take a step which it required huge "screwing-up of courage to the sticking-place" to resolve upon taking. Nothing but my strong persuasion of your benevolence, the distressing predicament in which I am placed, and the few, the very few, friends whom fate has permitted to cross the thorny and briery path of my sublunary course, could have induced me to ask the favour I meditate.

"I began this with the intention of explaining all; but, alas! my pen refuses to respond to my dictation, and I must, therefore, content myself with entreating you to call upon me at seven o'clock this evening, assuring you that, by so doing, you will confer an everlasting favour on, and eternally oblige,

"Your unhappy, but most sincere friend,

"Cynthius Virgilius Silverdale.

"Elysium Terrace, August 2nd.

"P.S. I shall 'pine away the lonely moments, pierced with anxious thought,' till I receive your answer, which, I trust, you will kindly send, without delay, by my messenger, and so put an end—as you only can do—to my soul-rending suspense."

To this epistle our hero wrote an answer in the following terms:

"Captain Wentworth presents his compliments to Mr. Silverdale, and will be happy to call on him at the time mentioned. Captain W. is sorry to hear that Mr. S. is unhappy, and will be glad, if it is in his power, to render him any assistance."

Having directed and sealed his letter, Wentworth rang the bell, and a little girl, the daughter of his landlady, making her appearance, he gave it her to deliver to the poet's messenger. Just as he had done so, he perceived that he had sealed it with a large seal, bearing the impression of a coat of arms. Hastily tearing off the envelope, he substituted another with a small seal, bearing simply his Christian name of Charles. He then again gave the letter to the child, replaced the larger seal in his writing-desk, sat down, and was soon again lost in thought. The seal which he still held in his hand had been given him by his mother, who had had it engraved on purpose for him when he was a boy. The remembrance of her mingled, as it frequently did, with his other feelings.

"How little did she imagine," thought he, "that her son would be one day banished and disowned! Could she have foreseen my father's treatment of me, she would have died still more unhappy. And you,

cruel author of her sufferings!" he continued, "do you ever feel one pang of sorrow or remorse for your conduct towards your victim? Does the thought that you embittered her existence, and at last broke her heart, ever sadden you, or cause you a moment's regret?" He drew forth, and gazed at her portrait, until his eyes were dimmed by the tears that fell fast upon it. "How she loved me!" he said to himself. "The longer I live in the world, the more I feel convinced that nothing can ever supply the place, or compensate for the loss of that best, and truest, and most constant of friends—a tender and affectionate mother!"

Chapter XIV.

I have had a most rare vision.
Midsummer's Night's Dream.

Soon after Wentworth's departure, Mr. Silverdale had called at Seagrove Hall. He found Florence alone in the drawing-room arranging some sketches in a portfolio.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "I find you as I expected,

Where painting, music's strains
With rival beauties the attention claims.

Is it not so? But I hope I am not putting any of the Muses to flight by an inopportune intrusion."

"It is impossible that the Muses can be disturbed by such a devoted admirer as yourself," was Florence's smiling reply.

Mr. Silverdale shook back the long straight lock of hair which always hung over his eyes, acknowledged the compliment by a bow, and then produced a gilt edged sheet of pink paper, on which was printed, in faint blue ink, the prospectus of a work of his own.

"It is," he said, as he handed the paper to Florence, "a volume of poems which I am about to publish by subscription. Five hundred subscribers, of three guineas each, will only just cover the expenses of publication, towards which number I have at present but seven."

"That is a very small proportion," observed Florence.

"It is," said Mr. Silverdale, with a sigh.

"I am almost surprised you have courage to proceed with such an undertaking," said Florence.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,"

said the poet, with a grim smile, "and I have little doubt of ultimately succeeding, though it is hard for even first-rate talent to make its way in these days; but 'never despair' is my motto. And that true genius will shine forth like the sun, in spite of all obstacles, is a fact which history and experience add their joint testimonies to prove. What a cheering and animating reflection! Its happy possessor may, indeed, without hyperbole,

The dark'ning universe defy
To quench his immortality!

But, to return to my book. It will form, as the prospectus states, a splendid quarto volume, elegantly bound, and illustrated with a superb engraving to each poem, from original designs, all drawn by amateur

artists, and those solely ladies; which, I think, cannot fail to give a peculiarly interesting and attractive character to the work, and to increase its popularity."

Florence desired him to set her name down for a copy of the work, and added that she had no doubt Lady Seagrove would also take one.

"And now," said Mr. Silverdale, when he had thanked her, "I have a great favour to beg of you. May I hope that you will grant it?"

"I shall be very happy," replied Florence, "if——"

"If!" interrupted Mr. Silverdale. "Let not your lips utter that word, but allow me to tell you my wishes. I have already several drawings, executed by kind and accomplished ladies; may I venture to request that your fair and fairy fingers will condescend to practise

> The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
> To quench it,

in my behalf?"

Florence expressed her readiness to assist him if she was able, and inquired the subject of the poem he wished to have illustrated.

"There are several," said Mr. Silverdale, "which no amiable and talented Apelles has yet deigned to immortalise. The one I am most desirous to see depicted is called 'My Noonday Dream,' of which I will give you a slight sketch. I am described as lying asleep in a grotto, in the foreground:

> Where woodbines cluster round the door
> Where shells and moss o'erlay the floor.

There,

> Rapt in a wild poetic dream,

I am suddenly surrounded by a host of spirits, terrestrial and celestial; cupids, satyrs, fauns, and naïads offering me all their pleasures as an inducement to be one of them; while in the centre of the picture a sea appears, and discloses, swimming in its crystal waters, innumerable mermaids, dolphins, and sirens, who point to the coral rocks and beds of pearl, 'dimly seen,' in the dark unfathomed caves beneath, and tempt me to become a spirit of the sea. On the shell-strewn beach stand Apollo and the Muses, Pan with a shepherd's crook, and all the principal goddesses of ancient mythology, Minerva with her Ægis, Venus drawn by doves, Juno supported by Iris, Diana prepared for the chase, and Ceres loaded with fruits, corn, and flowers, all vieing with each other in offering me their various gifts and advantages, and pressing me to determine which of them I will accept. On the other side, the greatest poets of all ages and all countries are congregated together; Homer and Horace, Milton and Shakspeare, Dante and Virgil, Schiller and Byron, with a host of others of inferior note, all holding out laurel crowns, and entreating me with different expressive actions and gestures not to allow any of the delights offered by the various other personages to allure me from following their bright footsteps to the Temple of Fame, which is seen rising amidst clustering vines, grassy hills, and majestic forest trees. In the distance, beyond the heathen deities, appear Mount Parnassus, the plains of Helicon, with the golden-sanded Pactolus slowly meandering. This, I think, would furnish an excellent and copious subject for a picture."

"Copious enough, certainly," said Florence. "It is far, very far above my powers."

"You will not refuse me!" cried the poet. "Six ladies have already declined the task."

"I fear I must be added to the number," said Florence.

"Will no power of ratiocination,

No soft persuasion's gentle force,

induce you to

Revoke your stern decree?"

said Mr. Silverdale, imploringly; "I will tell you another point in the story which my friend Mr. Bombastus Verbose thinks still better. You know Mr. Bombastus Verbose, of course, the editor of the *Literary Lumber Magazine?*"

Florence said that she was not acquainted with Mr. Verbose's writings.

"I am surprised at that," resumed Silverdale, "for he is, in my opinion, one of the greatest literary characters of the age. The scene which he prefers is where, after I have declared my determination to accompany my brother bards, a violent and obstinately-contested combat ensues between them and all the deities and spirits of earth, sea, and air; who, furious with jealousy and disappointment, fall upon the poets and endeavour to tear them in pieces. However, the poets are victorious, and carry me off, covered with laurel-wreaths, in a triumphal car, drawn, or rather whirled through the air by winged and fiery coursers, towards the Temple of Fame. What is your opinion? Do you like this better than the other?"

"No," said Florence, unable to refrain from laughing at the air of gravity and self-satisfaction with which he spoke; "I think it would be still more difficult."

Mr. Silverdale looked disappointed.

"Have you no poem that could be illustrated with a less intricate drawing?" said Florence. "A subject with not more than one or two figures?"

"Why, really," said Mr. Silverdale, "two or three figures are nothing at all. Any person who has the slightest talent for drawing can make a composition with one or two, or two or three figures. I should not think of asking you to do anything so simple. I own I am grieved, that with talents more than equal to the task, you will not undertake this dream."

"Are all your dreams as singular and fantastic?" asked Florence.

"Some of them more so," replied the poet. "Yet all are not, either; for I had one last night, which might come to pass if you choose. I dreamed that you, with your own fair hand, gave me a rose. Will you not make this dream a reality?"

"Willingly," answered Florence, handing him a vase of flowers; "you may take as many of these roses as you please."

"What a heartless way of doing the thing!" exclaimed Silverdale. "If you have one spark of kindness in your composition, you will give me one only, *yourself.*"

"There is a rose, then," said Florence, selecting one of the most beautiful; "or stay, I think this is more worthy of your acceptance."

"A thousand thanks," exclaimed Silverdale, pressing the flower to his lips; "I never before saw a rose like it. It is as unique as it is lovely. The only fear now is,

Lest I die with too much pleasure.

Now, indeed, I might

Die of a rose in aromatic pain."

"I should be sorry if my presence produced such dismal consequences,' said Florence, smiling.

"I shall cherish and preserve the flower to the latest day of my life," said Mr. Silverdale, placing it in his button-hole.

"I regret that Lady Seagrove is out this morning," said Florence, breaking a pause which ensued.

"Do not regret it on my account," said the poet, "for when I have your society it is impossible I could wish for any other."

"You are very complimentary," said Florence.

"Indeed," he replied, "by the glorious heaven above us, it is no compliment. If *you* take an interest in me—if—if you are kind to me, fate may frown, or fortune smile unheeded."

He would have added more, but Florence interrupted him by asking, as she rose from her seat and moved towards the open window, whether he would walk with her and meet Lady Seagrove, whom she saw at a little distance coming down the avenue.

Chapter XV.

If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.

Romeo and Juliet.

I dare say this quarrel will drink blood another day.

Henry VI.—Part I.

Since the day of the archery meeting a gradual alteration had taken place in Mr. Silverdale's feelings; or, as he himself expressed it, "a change had come o'er the spirit of his dream." It was at the archery meeting that he had first seen Florence Hamilton, and he was not long in becoming aware that she was as superior to Lady Louisa Tufton in temper and character, as she was in beauty of person. It is but justice to say that for some time, believing that the fair widow, with all her coquetry and teasing ways, really loved him, he struggled against this fresh preference; but on another scene occurring, in which Lady Louisa was even more unreasonable and out of temper than when they sat together in the gallery at Craven House, he, after trying to pacify and induce her to be reconciled for nearly an hour, left her, completely wearied and disgusted; and from that time, having argued himself into the conviction that she could not love him sincerely, or she would not so constantly make him miserable, he gave himself up entirely to his newly-born love for Florence. In this transfer of his affections he was really uninfluenced by mercenary motives. It is true that he knew he could not afford in his present state to marry a woman without fortune, but Lady Louisa possessed a very comfortable independence, such as Mr. Silverdale would have been more than satisfied with, *en attendant* the realisation of his golden dreams of the fortune that was to result from his poetical talents.

As he walked slowly onwards in the direction of the town of B——, after his visit to Seagrove Hall, he fell into a reverie about Florence. "How silent she was," he said to himself; "and how reserved in her manner towards me, after I had hinted at my sentiments. Sure signs of

a tenderness of feeling. Cynthius Silverdale, you have made an impression. Then the rose—how carefully she chose out the one most worthy of me, as she said. I will compose a sonnet to it."

He did so, and recited the commencement aloud:

"Oh, lovely rose! bright image of my fair,
I'll ever cherish thee with fondest care;
Sweet flowêr—as I thy glossy petals view,
Embalm'd in fragrance, and impearl'd with dew,
A thousand thoughts of her o'erwhelm my heart;
Alas! too cruel fate has bade us part——"

Here he stopped, to consider whether he should leave the last line, or substitute another of a more cheerful character, and had just determined that the latter would be more suitable, as he was not compelled to part from Florence, and fate had not yet been cruel to them, when he was startled by hearing a loud harsh voice exclaim:

"That's an uncommonly fine rose you have in your button-hole; I admire it exceedingly!"

"Oh, good morning, Sir Robert," said the poet. "I hope you are well."

"Very well, thank you," growled Craven, still looking at the rose. "I am sure I have seen that flower before. It is a very remarkable one, with that vivid crimson colour, and those curious white streaks. A new variety, raised by my own gardener."

"It is beautiful," said Mr. Silverdale; "and I prize it highly, both for its own sake, and that of the donor."

"The donor!" cried Craven, his colour rising. "Who the deuce gave it you?"

"You are curious, Sir Robert; and not over polite."

"I have a right to be so," answered the baronet, gruffly.

"How?" asked Silverdale.

"I'll tell you," said Craven. "I am positive that that rose you are so proud of was once mine, for there is not another plant of the kind in England, and there were only two flowers on the tree, one of which is in my drawing-room, and the other I took this morning as a present to a young lady."

"And a young lady this morning gave it me, in token of her—her—preference."

"You do not mean to say," exclaimed Sir Robert, his voice trembling with rage, "that Miss Hamilton gave you that flower?"

"No less a person," replied the poet, complacently.

"And in token of preference?"

"Most true."

"Most false!" thundered Sir Robert. "Give me the flower!"

"I would rather give you the last drop of my heart's blood," said Silverdale, taking the rose carefully in his hand:

"Oh, beauteous rose!
Not worlds could tempt me e'er to part with thee.

Good morning, Sir Robert. It is time that I should

Homeward plod my weary way."

"No, no!" cried Sir Robert, seizing his arm. "This demands an explanation."

"I have none to offer," said Silverdale, shaking him off; "nor have you a right to demand any:

I see no reason if I wear this rose
That any one should, therefore, be suspicious."

"Confound your poetry!" cried Sir Robert, in a paroxysm of anger. "Speak to me in plain English. Tell me that what you said is a joke, or——"

"I could not utter such a falsehood," said Silverdale, smiling proudly.

"Then by Heaven!" said Sir Robert, grinding his teeth, "you shall hear more of this! And, in the meantime, you shall not go showing and bragging about my flower. If you won't give it me quietly I must take it."

As he spoke, he attempted to snatch the rose from Silverdale, who, growing angry in his turn, pushed away his arm, exclaiming,

"Hold, Sir Robert, or beware of the consequences!"

But almost before he had finished speaking Craven had rudely torn off the head of the rose, dashed it to the ground, and trampled it under his feet.

"Do you think I shall tamely suffer this!" cried Silverdale, his face reddening with passion. "No; I consider it an insult—an insult I shall neither forget nor forgive!"

"*You* talk of insult!" cried Sir Robert, "when it is I who am insulted, I who am——"

Rage choked his utterance.

"There is but one mode of redress," said Silverdale, shortly.

"I was about to say so," exclaimed Sir Robert. "A brace of pistols this evening on Sedgefield Common. Do you understand me?"

"Understand you!" repeated Silverdale, with a contemptuous sneer.

The sound of a horse's hoofs now caused both the disputants to look round, and they saw Pemberton.

"What is the matter?" he inquired, observing their flushed faces and angry looks.

Sir Robert and Silverdale began immediately to recount their affronts, each telling the story his own way; but as they both spoke at once, each striving to be loudest, he of course understood neither. He told them so, and then appealed to Silverdale, as the least violent of the two.

"No, no," exclaimed Sir Robert; "hear me. He distorts everything."

"I will not stay to be further insulted!" cried the poet, in great indignation, turning to depart as he spoke.

"It only remains, then, to find our seconds and fix the time," said Sir Robert. "The last we can do at once."

"By all means," replied Silverdale; "let it be at eight o'clock this evening. The place, as you said, Sedgefield Common."

"Agreed!" said Sir Robert, briefly.

"This evening do I meet thee fell as death,"

said the poet, with an air of great heroism.

"Good Heavens!" said Pemberton, "what am I to understand by all this? You are not serious?"

"I can answer for myself, that I never was more so," said Sir Robert, with a fierce look at his future antagonist.

"And

I am in most profound earnest,"

said Silverdale, solemnly.

"But, my good friends——" commenced Pemberton.

"Call not friends the two bitterest enemies who ever trode the earth," interrupted Silverdale.

"But you must be friends. Come—I am sure you will be able to settle this dispute amicably," said Pemberton.

Loud exclamations as to the utter impossibility of doing so were the only answer he received; and the strenuous efforts which he continued to make—after having gathered from words and casual expressions dropped by the rivals the origin of the quarrel—to bring about a reconciliation, were entirely fruitless. When at length the poet, at the highest pitch of heroic indignation, walked off with a rapidity of pace and vehement energy of gesture very unusual to him, Sir Robert urgently entreated Pemberton to be his second. For a long time Pemberton refused; but at last, chiefly from the good-natured hope that he might be instrumental in adjusting the affair without fighting, most reluctantly consented.

Having walked very quickly for about a mile in the direction of B——, Silverdale, tired and out of breath, began to reflect more calmly on what had passed; and presently, in a very troubled state of mind, sat down on a heap of stones by the roadside, to collect his scattered faculties, and consider what was best to be done in this new and unforeseen emergency.

He was engaged that day to dine at Mrs. Mumford's, which engagement, knowing that he should meet Florence Hamilton, and be sure of not meeting Sir Robert, he resolved to keep.

"But who can I ask to be my second?" he said anxiously to himself. "Mr. Simon Mumford? And what should I get? Grim, forbidding looks, a grave lecture on the folly, sin, and wickedness of duelling, and a solemn admonition to go home, read the Bible, pray for a new heart, and a better frame of mind; and then extend the olive-branch of peace to Craven, with meek and Christian humility. Mr. Bombastus Verbose? I might just as well apply to the Great Mogul or the Pacha of Egypt. There would be quite as much chance of succeeding with those princes as with the awful and unapproachable editor of the *Literary Lumber Magazine*. Captain Wentworth? Ha! that is a bright thought. He would be just the person; but my acquaintance with him is too slight; and yet he appears benevolent and kind-hearted. I do not think he would refuse me. I can but try. I will write to him as soon as I reach home."

THE COMMERCIAL SNOB.

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

In commencing our sketch of the Commercial Snob, we must, in justice to the body of ambassadors to which he belongs, premise that they are a very different class of the genus *homo* to that which formed their fraternity half a century ago. Bagmen is no longer an appropriate designation to them applied, as those appendages to the craft are now almost universally discarded. There is, we are aware, one of the old *regimé*—the last of his race remaining, who, booted and spurred, surmounts his saddle bags astride an ancient-looking Rosinante, whose appearance is in admirable keeping with the frosty-face and grizzled looks of his rider. We have ourselves contemplated this lingerer on the scene with feelings somewhat akin to awe. We never behold his spare anatomy and his antique dress without being reminded of the Last Man, or those mystic spirits which are said to revisit the glimpses of the moon. We should, indeed, be inclined to regard him as a "Day Ghost," had we not been led by curiosity to follow his movements, until we have seen him converse with those whom we knew to be in the flesh. Many summer and winter days have passed away since this remnant of the past, the last of his race, was first pointed out to our observation; much of the enthusiastic spirit of young manhood has passed from us, the romantic hues which coloured the path of life have vanished from our vision, and the sardonic grin of old time has revealed itself in the dissolving view—since we first saw the ancient solitary rider, and yet is he unaltered. On, on he jogs his accustomed route, town after town, true as the dial to the sun to his time; the same round, the same spot, the same hour. Could we but follow him and listen to his voice, certain are we that he would be found ever to utter the same words, at the same time, and the same place. In our peregrinations he is the nearest approach that we have met with to the Wandering Jew; and we think it neither impossible nor improbable that that condemned, undying piece of mortality may, in the catalogue of his punishment, have included that of the life of a commercial ambassador. But to our sketch of the Commercial Snob; and here let us, without further preface, introduce Mr. Spiff.

The reader must have seen Spiff. Be he a dweller in town or village, he cannot but have observed rattling over the stones of the one, or through the quiet streets of the other, his dark-green bodied, high-wheeled gig, ornamented with a gay-hued dashing-looking rug, hanging over the seat, a handsome terrier or setter seated thereon, alongside of Spiff himself, piloting his sixteen-hands chestnut slasher, which, with sleek glistening coat and silver-studded harness, looks as gay as his master, and can do—only ask Spiff—how many miles an hour? Of a verity, Spiff's is a spicy turn out, and, to do him but bare justice, he displays considerable taste and style in the equipment of his own five-feet ten of humanity. You shall see worse cut coats in Regent-street, ay! and many of them too, any hour of the twenty-four, and less taste displayed, than in the pattern of his waistcoat, and the harmony of contrasted colouring of the same with

the cataract of satin, or the modest tie which encircles his neck. And yet is this very Spiff one of the snobs of his order.

Binks, the stage-bagman, we need scarcely tell our readers, is a gross caricature. Such a monster! who is represented with a white hat, bright blue scarf, red waistcoat, and flaming tartan trousers; and who never heard of any Milton, but one who travelled in the button trade; was never seen, even in the middle ages of commercial travelling. Yet, must we confess, that in Binks the public have had presented to them a character bearing some affinity to the Commercial Snob. Spiff, who, when off his journey, sojourns in a tenement in whose largest room to swing a cat would be not exactly, as Spiff would say, on the cards,—and dines off cold meat more than twice a week, or, as a single lodger, takes plain meals with the family at so much per day; when out, sits down to the rich spreads at the hotels with an air as though he were in the habit of dining only in "marble halls," and was worth at least thousands a year. Woe to the cook if Spiff should detect the most minute departure from what he knows to be "the thing." No prince in his palace, no grumbler, however great, ever turned up his nose with more contempt and ill-humour at a dinner that was deficient of something in particular, which, because not thought requisite and not provided, was the very thing wanted, than Spiff.

"Roast beef!" he cries; "I'm sick of it. And as to that saddle of mutton, it's not cooked to suit me. John, tell your cook that he may be able, perhaps, to operate for chaw-bacons, but not for gentlemen. What have you got to follow?"

"A brace of wild ducks, sir; plum-pudding and cheese-cakes."

"Wild ducks again! 'pon my soul, I've been wild-ducked to death lately; and d—n the pastry, I say! I hope you have a good Cheshire cheese in the house, and some decent celery. I'll try to make a dinner of bread and cheese."

The grumbler, however, well knows he will do nothing of the kind.

"Spiff, let me send you a slice of this beef; 'tis done to a turn; there —and a little of the fat, you'll find it delicious."

"Thankee, Mr. President; at your recommendation I'll try it, for it does seem properly cooked. Pity the mutton's spoiled, for I should have preferred it. Fagh! have you tasted this sherry, Mr. President? Let me beg you will have it changed; they have, surely, better wine than this in the house, it's hot as vitriol, and more than half brandy, I'll swear. Ah! the Crown, at Fuddleton, is the house for a glass of good sherry. George Smith" (be it observed, the Commercial Snob ever calls by their Christian names the landlords who stand high in his estimation, with whom he is intimate, and in whose bars he is regarded as a somebody),—"George Smith never put a poor glass of wine on the table in his life. Have you tasted his port lately, Jenks?"

"Yes, last Sunday three of us did five bottles of it, and splendid stuff it is, by Jove," replies Jenks, the vice-president who, by the way, is himself a rising scion of commercial snobbism, and who, being young on the road, could not, in the practice of his new vocation, *à la Spiff*, do less than acquiesce in what the latter said, regarding him as he did as a model. Be it observed, too, that this was Jenks's third journey only, and as he had originally been simply an under warehouseman, or book-keeper, in the house now represented, his opportunities of becoming a judge of wine,

on a salary of some five-and-twenty shillings a week, had been somewhat limited. When to this, too, it is added that every glass he took beyond a pint would cause his detention in bed as many hours after the usual time of rising next morning, if able to rise at all, it will be evident that his judgment, in confirmation of Spiff's eulogium of Smith of the Crown's wine, was calculated to have some weight.

Perhaps, the servants in the house are not aware when Spiff has arrived. Perhaps the ostler doesn't know, nor the boots—oh, no! perhaps not. Perhaps Spiff's voice is not heard occasionally elevated above the common pitch, and perhaps boots, ostler, chambermaid, and the whole string of functionaries, are not by him sometimes individually and collectively consigned to a place, not only from which no traveller ever returns, but to which no adventurous spirit has ever been known daring enough to wish to go.

Spiff is a good customer to the houses in which he sojourns. He has frequently some of his customers to dine or sup with him, and as he stays in a town of any calibre some two or three days or a week, he is a customer worth attending to, and Spiff knows it. The host ever salutes his coming with a smile and a glad to see him; the helpers of the house know it would not be well to offend him; he conducts himself to them accordingly and Spiff loves obedience.

The Commercial Snob is universally as unfurnished within his cranium as he is well decked without his corpus, and hence is his conversation very limited in its range of themes. He is great alone in the histories of all the landlords, landladies, waiters, *et id genus omne*, belonging to the houses which he patronises on his circuit; and may be pronounced a fair authority as to why old John, the ostler, left the Swan,—or why William, the waiter, left the George. He not unfrequently talks politics; and not a little worthy of notice is it that the side he espouses is invariably the non-movement party—for the Commercial Snob, in his predilections, is quite an aristocrat. He talks politics; but as his information is gathered solely from a dip now and then into the mazes of a few articles in the newspapers, his capability to discuss a question is but limited; and he, therefore, falls back upon a style in argument, which he finds answers his purpose so well in other respects,—and that is, the bold and swaggering Drawcansir style. He deals only in generalities, never condescending to descend from the hectoring declamatory position to enter into particulars, and advance proofs.

"I tell you what, sir," says Spiff, with a loud voice, "Reform was a piece of humbug,—yes, sir, humbug! Free-trade is humbug; both inroads on the constitution; yes, sir, on the glorious constitution of this country! 'Tis the onward spirit of the age, as it is called; and a d—d bad spirit it is, too. Ruin to everything and to everybody, and nothing else, don't tell me."

"But, Mr. Spiff," inquires Brown, who is in the tea-trade, to whom the Reform Bill gave a vote, who contributed to the League Fund, and who, in spite of the big words having come from the great gun Spiff, with his handsome stock and stylish waistcoat, ventures to attack him,—"but, Mr. Spiff, will you show us where is the injury you speak of done?"

"Done, sir!" exclaims Spiff, in a yet louder voice, with a look of

mingled surprise and indignation. "Done, sir, to everything, to everybody! I say, sir, Reformers, Free-Traders, and the whole kit of them, are enemies to their country,—a country, sir, that would be all the better were they out of it. If they don't like it, sir, why let them leave it; that's what I say," and with this sublime climax Spiff usually winds up.

Should the inquirer for proofs not have sufficient penetration to discover what an empty head the well-oiled, curly locks of the nobby Spiff cover, his next request for better logic to substantiate the charges made would be met with a still more vague, and still more emphatically delivered piece of oratory, interspersed with sundry *demmes*, and in which the epithets of vagabonds, thieves, &c., would be plentifully sprinkled; the conclusion being, most likely, that the said Spiff would walk twenty miles barefoot any day to see the whole lot hanged. With such a politician, Brown, Black, or any one else, would soon discover that argument would be worse than useless, and, as amatter of course, the silence of contempt is duly construed by Spiff as an acknowledgment of defeat, and hence on that head Spiff ever considers himself impregnable.

The Commercial Snob, with all his assumption, which renders his *gaucherie* more striking, is often guilty of habits at table which pretty plainly reveal the vulgarity of his domestic education. You shall hear him perform with his teeth for half an hour after dinner, as though they were a wind instrument; and, when drinking his tea, he will make a peculiar noise whilst swallowing the liquid, as though it had, first, great difficulty in effecting a blubbering entrance through his lips, and afterwards had to pass over a series of cataracts in his mouth ere reaching the gullet.

The Commercial Snob has a most reverential reverence for title. He has, of course, his remarkable events which have occurred to him since he has been out, and, with the Commercial Snob, these are ever connected with what he calls great folks; meeting with Sir Somebody, or my Lord So-and-So. It was only yesterday that we heard one of the genus describing how he had journeyed with Lord Tomnoddy outside the coach from Grantham to Newark, and what Lord Tomnoddy had said to him in the course of a long conversation, and what he had said to Lord Tomnoddy; the interesting incident was told by him at least a dozen times during the day. Nay, we know one of these great card and title worshippers, who has a stock story of an oyster supper and an hour or two's chat which he once had with Sir Hector Lofto Plantagenet.

"I assure you, sir," says the Snob, in winding up his relation of the event; "I assure you that Sir Hector Lofto was just as free and easy, and as pleasant, as though he had been one of ourselves."

The Snob tells the story as though he had partaken of one of earth's best joys in having conversed with a real baronet, and feels that he has therein enjoyed a privilege equal to a visit to the seventh heaven.

This paper would be far from complete did we not speak of the Literary Commercial Snob, for such a being is there to be found on the road. A most striking character in this line occurs to us whilst writing—a big burly fellow, who looks much more like a butcher than a bookworm, and who by some means has contrived to obtain a reputation amongst the brotherhood on the strength of what he is going to do.

Yes, some five or six years ago, it began to be whispered that Click was engaged on a work upon Commercial Rooms and Commercial Men,

and that it would be a rare show-up. There were some who had been indulged with a sight of the manuscript; rumours were rife that So-and-So were hit off to the life, and expectation was on tiptoe for the coming treat. Click is still on the road; and although five or six years have elapsed since the work was undertaken, it has not yet seen the light.

During that period, however, Click has been great, very great on the road. This Literary Snob has ruled the roast, and found his decisions at the board final, any time these five years, on the strength of the reputed work in preparation. With very little brains, in common with the race of Commercial Snobs, he has an awful stock of conceit. You may see him go through a regular series of attitudes in the commercial room, affecting the strange eccentricities of genius; and many a time and oft have the functionaries in the inns been soundly rated for disturbing him, when, with his great greenish-grey eyes fixed on the ceiling, he has been lost in abstraction of thought. Need we say that Click's long-promised work never has, and never will see the light. Need we say that although he has managed, and cleverly too, to cause it to be believed that he is an occasional contributor to the first publications of the day, that he never penned a line that ever reached the hands of a Printer's Devil.

Like the *Witch* in "Macbeth," his cry has been, "I'll do, I'll do!" and alas! for the permanent fame of burly Click, all has yet been, and ever will be, whilst he vegetates on earth, "bubble, bubble."

Our paper has extended too far, or we would give some further illustrations of Commercial Snobbism. We must not, however, conclude without observing, in justice to the Commercial Men of the present day, that, apart from the snobs, there are many very intelligent, liberal-minded, gentlemanly fellows amongst them. Richard Cobden, not many years ago, was one of the brotherhood; nor is he the only one of the body who has become a member of the House of Commons. The writer of the most popular song of its day, "All round my hat," is still on the road, and, what is more, with much talent has not a particle of snobbism about him. Washington Irving, when in England, mingled with and spoke admiringly of the body; and well we know that the *entrée* of the commercial room is generally considered desirable by many who, although not engaged in business, are in the habit of sojourning at hotels. To that desire the writer of this sketch owes an evening's society with the brightest living ornament to the literature of England. From experience we know that men of mind, the great in intellect, who have shed a lustre on the age in which they live, often mingle with the brotherhood—a body of men who may be said, at the present day, to be characterised by gentlemanly bearing, frank, intelligent, anecdotical, and cheerful companionship, although dotted here and there by a Commercial Snob.

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

By the Rev. James Bandinel.

Chapter VII.

THE THIRD DAY'S HUNT.

The morning opened brightly, and the princess, with her train, accompanied the hunters as far as the Birthday Knoll. As, however, a violent thunderstorm came upon the party at that spot, Sir Edred took advantage of the circumstance to urge her return. Arnold, after a glance of deep meaning to the knight, warmly supported his proposal. Sir Edred's brow darkened as he turned on the bold harper; but the minstrel merely hummed the tune of the mysterious song which had so perturbed Edred on a previous occasion; and, grinding his teeth, the Northman remained silent. Arnold's urgency, however, decided the matter: he was known to be a careful observer of Nature, and an almost unerring judge of the weather; and the princess returned to Arlstadt.

"It is strange, Alice," said she, "very strange; but at times I feel an absolute aversion to Sir Edred. And yet I ought to be always warmly grateful to him for saving my father's life."

"If you will pardon me, madam," replied the damsel, "for disagreeing with you, I must say that I see nothing at all strange in your aversion: I, for one, share it most cordially. If it had been Sir Eustace, now," added she, maliciously, "to whom your highness had taken a dislike, I should have been really surprised. And then, too, do you so soon forget the warning of the Rose Queen?"

The princess, whose countenance relieved by the earlier, had been covered with blushes by the latter portion of her friend's address, eagerly caught at the concluding sentence, both to excuse her feeling and cover her confusion, and exclaimed, "True, true! How strange that I should even for an hour have forgotten that warning!"

We will, however, leave for the present our princess and her train, and return to the hunters. No sooner had the ladies departed, than they divided into three troops, and took the directions agreed on over night. Sir Edred expressed his wish, which was accordingly granted, of taking with him only a few companions. Alured was desirous, on the other hand, of having as large a force as possible, as he expected to find plenty of sport; an expectation which was shared by his subjects and guests, so that Eustace, though having a far larger troop than Edred, was but ill accompanied.

"They will not be able to make the least resistance," thought Sir Edred, as he mused for a moment, whilst his steed cropped a few leaves of the Zornbaum, and looked at the receding party. As he did so, his glance again met that of the minstrel, who had once more attached himself to the young knight. Arnold smiled—a smile full of deep meaning; and though he could not fathom it, an indistinct foreboding of evil passed through Edred's mind. He felt, however, that this was not a time at

which he could question the minstrel, and setting spurs to his horse he was soon out of sight.

Sir Eustace and his party had not ridden far, when the identical wild boar, which had cost so much interest, sprang up almost under his horse's feet, and, as on the preceding day, led his pursuers a weary chase over some of the most difficult ground in the forest. The party had been so small at the outset, and so many had been unhorsed or distanced, or otherwise disposed of, that when Sir Eustace at length found himself on better ground, with the boar only a short distance ahead, he was accompanied only by three of his followers, one of whom was Arnold. They gave chase for half a mile down a wide avenue, until they came to a spot where several glades met. The boar halted for a moment, and looking round on his pursuers, chose the path which led direct to Schreckenstein, and then set off at increased speed.

"This will never do," said Arnold, drawing his bowstring close up to his ear. The aim was good—the bow twanged—the arrow entered the boar's side, pierced the tough hide which had hitherto been proof against every missile, and reached the heart. And the savage beast turning round to face his destroyer, uttered a wild unearthly yell, and expired.

Of the various avenues which met at the point before mentioned, one led in the direction of Arlstadt. Down this the small party now proceeded. They had not gone far, however, when Arnold despatched Eustace to announce the result of the expedition, and request that a reinforcement might be immediately sent to meet him and assist in carrying the boar. Soon after this he halted, and, dragging the carcase into a small recess amongst the bushes, expressed his intention of waiting there till assistance should arrive, and desired his two companions to make the best of their way to Arlstadt, and procure fresh steeds both for himself and them.

Scarcely were they out of sight ere a party of the Schreckenstein company appeared in the glade.

"I wonder that we have not fallen in with them yet," cried one of the party. "However, we must obey orders. The baron himself, I know, intended to move forward in such order as to ensure his falling on their main body and carrying off the king, or, at any rate, seizing those knights whose prowess prevented the success of our first enterprise."

Arnold smiled the same strange smile which had some hours before disturbed Sir Edred; and the troop passing on, were soon out of sight.

At length his envoys to Arlstadt returned, and, telling them of what he had seen and heard, Arnolph pressed on as rapidly as was consistent with the enormous bulk of the wild boar. He was just turning short round, to take the open road to the place of rendezvous, when Alured himself met him, at the head of a strong body, and in every direction the horns sounded, commanding the retreat or answering the command. As the minstrel rode by the king to the place of rendezvous, he narrated to him all that had occurred. Alured was much concerned at the intelligence, and detached a strong force in the direction taken by the troop of freebooters, under the command of Sir Ernest of Brenheim, forbidding Sir Eustace, on account of the utterly jaded condition of his steed, to accompany them. He himself, with Eustace, Arnold, and the main body, advanced in the direction taken by Sir Edred, leaving the boar in charge of a small troop, with orders to blow the royal trumpet every five minutes,

as a signal of recal for all stragglers. They had proceeded some way ere they met with any trace either of friend or foe. At length, at the summit of a low ridge, they found a noble charger lying dead on the ground, and a gallant warrior, apparently dying, by his side. From his broken accents they gathered that, not finding the boar, Edred had pushed on until he was suddenly stopped and attacked on all sides by a large body of freebooters. The conflict was a desperate one. Edred's horse fell mortally wounded, and his rider, entangled by the fall, was overpowered and bound. His comrades were all slain fighting gallantly, except the dying man, who, finding himself alone and wounded, as well as his horse, cut his way through the enemy, and fled for his life. His noble charger carried him with gradually abating speed, till, worn out by fatigue and loss of blood, he sank lifeless to the ground on gaining the summit of the ridge where they had both been found.

It was soon discovered that pursuit was hopeless, as the marauders had joined their leader, and Sir Hildebrand had immediately ordered a rapid retreat to Schreckenstein, annoyed that he had failed in his attempt to surprise the king, and apprehensive lest he should be discovered and attacked by an overwhelming force.

The whole body of hunters, therefore, formed at the Birthday Knoll, and moved in procession towards Arlstadt, preceded by six horsemen, carrying the boar between them, and headed by Arnold of the Brocken, whom the king, amidst loud acclamations, proclaimed victor of the day.

The princess smiled her sweetest smile as she placed the chaplet on Arnold's brow, for she loved minstrelsy right well, and no embarrassing feeling prevented her from expressing her sentiments. And woe to that maiden who does not honour the minstrel's calling! If she be virtuous, her virtue is but the passionless absence of vice; if she be beautiful, hers is mere personal beauty—the beauty of the body and not of the soul; if she possess talents, they are all of a base mechanical order:—she is without heart and without mind, unsuited for friendship and incapable of love.

And now Arnold resigned his savage prize into the hands of the proper authorities, having first repossessed himself of his arrow, which was made of pure silver, in the form of a cross, with a Greek inscription on it. As he extracted this, a hot sulphureous vapour arose from the wound, and the whole carcase, on closer inspection, appeared to be in a state of decomposition. Some thought that this was produced by the long run which the animal had had on two succeeding days; others, that the thunder, a tremendous peal of which had occurred just about the period of his death, had accelerated his decay; whilst others, and amongst these the minstrels, ascribed the result to supernatural agency.

And now again the feast began; for the misfortunes of the day were not allowed to interfere with the hospitality of the palace, nor had they in the least degree damped the appetites of the guests. All, indeed, felt a gloom upon their spirits, especially Alured and Eustace; all except Arnold. He did not, however, appear at all concerned at the capture of Sir Edred, and exerted himself to the utmost to rally the spirits of the whole company. He succeeded in his attempt even beyond his hopes; and all were of opinion that neither of the preceding victors had done the honours of the feast so well as that matchless minstrel and peerless archer, Arnold of the Brocken. Three, however, out of his assembly,

baffled his skill. Alured was full of thought for his preserver, blamed himself continually for not insisting upon his taking a sufficient guard, and turned over in his mind the chances of his being killed in cold blood by the miscreant into whose hands he had fallen, ere he could be succoured. Eustace was full of regret that he had been unable to repay the service of the preceding day by saving his rival, dying in his defence, or at least sharing his captivity—full of indignation at the treachery of Sir Hildebrand. But the most impracticable mourner was Sir Gideon of the wall-eye, who continued during the whole of the banquet to lament over the loss of the wild boar. Every mouthful that he ate suggested to his wounded spirit a sad comparison with the beloved dish; every draught that he quaffed reminded him that he was not washing down any portion of the inestimable beast. It is even said that tears were seen ever and anon to course down his aged cheeks, tears of real woe.

The Lady Alethè, whatever might be her personal feelings with regard to Sir Edred, could not but be much distressed by the fact of his captivity. She found, however, in the minstrel, ample employment for her thoughts. It is, indeed, probable that from that day to this there never arose so perfectly delightful a companion in the way of conversation, until Washington Irving, after the lapse of more than ten centuries, appeared on the field. And, allowing for the difference of times, and habits, and manners, and for the directly poetic hue which coloured everything, that the Teuton said, there was so close a resemblance between them. Arnold had the same manly grace, the same elegant simplicity, the same indescribable charm of good taste and good feeling—everything that he said was worth treasuring up to the end of time; and what raised both above all other competitors was, that they evidently were the most delightful men of their age, not because they tried to be so, but because they could not help it. There was in everything a desire to please—there was in nothing an attempt to shine.

At length the accustomed hour drew nigh, and the princess having called upon him to sing, Arnold arose from the seat of honour, slowly took his harp, and after carefully tuning it, commenced

THE TEUTON.

'Midst the trees of the forest the oak stands alone;
None disputes his dominion, none questions his throne;
And each bird of the air, as it soars on spread wing,
Salutes the dread eagle alone as its king;
And the beasts of the wild, in their haughtiest mood,
Never cope with the lion, the lord of the wood:—
And thus midst the nations, alone in his might,
The Teuton claims proudly to rule as his right.
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

The pride of the Roman our prowess has bow'd,
And the craft of the Greek by our valour was cow'd;
And the millions of Celts in Gaul, Britain, and Spain,
Have yielded their homes to the swords of Almaine.
From that sea where the billows are numb'd by the cold,
To the zone where the sandwastes like oceans are roll'd,
The sons of the Teuton—the Teuton alone—
Or rule in the castle, or reign on the throne.
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

And vain 'gainst the Teuton those demons of war—
The Alan, and Tartar, the Hun, and Avar.

Soon, soon shall the East, like her sister the West,
Receive the bold Teuton an unbidden guest;—
Till the earth and her children acknowledge our sway
From the shores of Iernè to those of Cathay.
And if a new universe rise to our view,
The sons of the Teuton will conquer that too.
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

And why stands the Teuton alone in his might?
Why claims he thus proudly to rule as his right?
Oh, it is not alone that our sinews are strong,
And our bosoms unsullied by falsehood or wrong;
And it is not alone that our souls are as free
As the clouds of the heaven or the waves of the sea;
And it is not alone that our stoutest hearts own
The symbol of GOD in the king on the throne.
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

But it is that the maidens who spring from our race
Are matchless in form and are peerless in face;
And what the true Teuton aye prizes still more,
They are pure as the foam-flakes untouch'd by the shore.
'Tis the true love of woman that makes the true knight;
And our valour is kindled by eyes pure as bright;
And though seeking for glory the Teuton may roam,
Still the heart of the Teuton is aye in his home.
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

But no harp can declare, and no lay can express
What the hearts and the tongues of all mortals confess!
For though bright are the maidens of lovely Almaine,
The loveliest were honour'd to be of *thy* train!
As the fame of thy lineage, unrivall'd, art *thou*,
And the fairest, and proudest, before thee must bow:
And the Teuton, low bending, thy sceptre must own,
Hailing THEE as his conqueror,—*thee*, THEE alone!
The Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton! the Teuton!

Arnold's song was received with that enthusiasm which is always accorded to those who successfully appeal to the most powerful passions of their audience. The younger warriors had joined unanimously in the chorus of the second verse; the elder had united their voices to swell each succeeding one. As Arnold, at the conclusion of the last stanza, knelt on one knee to the Princess Alethè, the male guests, young and old, followed his example; and as they rose, the ladies also rose from their seats, and joined in the last repetition of the burden. Yet even then, above the clear tones of the maidens of Almaine, above the deep bass of her warriors, resounded the magnificent voice of Arnold of the Brocken.

Alethè was perfectly overcome. She rose, and attempted to express her thanks, but was fain to burst into tears. Yet what are more eloquent than the tears of youth and beauty?

The princess having departed, the party resumed their seats; and after the revel had proceeded to a sufficient length, the king addressed the assembly, and stated that it was his intention to suspend the festival for the present; to proceed on the following Monday, in person, at the head of a sufficient force, against Schreckenstein; liberate Sir Edred, hang Sir Hildebrand and all his retainers, and, having garrisoned the castle with good men and true, return to Arlstadt, and conclude the rejoicings which had been so unpleasantly interrupted. "He had heard, too," he said, "that the Khan of the Avars was advancing at the head

of an enormous army of barbarians. He could not, indeed, speak with any certainty on this point, but he had despatched messengers to his allies, to request them to hold themselves in readiness to advance at a moment's notice, if their aid were required to stay the progress of the common enemy. He should himself be employed during the morrow in preparations for the expedition, but his daughter and uncle would do their best to entertain his guests, who would, he trusted, all await his return."

Loud cheers followed this speech from the throne; and Sir Eustace, with the greater number of the strangers, requested permission to join the expedition. Alured permitted the knight of Rheinfels to accompany him, and allowed a certain number of the others to follow his banner. They were to be chosen by lot.

Chapter VIII.

SIR EDRED.

The reader may well imagine that Sir Edred's feelings were none of the pleasantest as he found himself bound hand and foot on a powerful horse, and proceeding rapidly towards Schreckenstein. Death in the field is one thing, death in a dungeon another; he felt, too, that by suppressing the intelligence which he had obtained on the other night he had sealed his own fate; how Eustace had escaped the bands of Hildebrand he could not imagine. The idea did, indeed, cross his mind that the God of the Christians might have interfered either providentially or miraculously to preserve His faithful worshipper; but he scouted the notion as absurd. "No," said he, "if Zernebock could not protect me, I will not believe that any divine or angelic power has preserved Eustace. There are no gods; all is chance; and yet—" And he began to meditate, ending by imprecating every curse that the heart could wish, the mind, frame, or the tongue utter on Zernebock, Arnold, and Eustace.

At length the cavalcade, after a long and hurried retreat, reached the mouth of the gorge in which the castle was situated, and, as they halted to receive their leader's commands, the prisoner had an ample view of the massive building in which he was about to be immured. The main body of the castle was an exact square; there were, however, four towers on each side, running up outside from the base to the summit of the walls, and rising half as high again above them; and in the centre of the castle arose one vast tower, which, equal to four of the smaller towers in girth, rose high in the air above them all. The material of which the whole building was constructed was a hard shining stone of a jet-black hue and dazzling brightness; along the parapets flickered lurid flames, red, blue, and orange colour; through the casements, which at a certain height from the ground were thickly scattered, shone lights like those of large bonfires; and from the Donjon Keep floated the terrible standard of the dreaded baron—on a ground of gold, surrounded by a black border, a bloody hand. Sir Edred's practised eye surveyed the fortress in every direction, but he could not discover that which he sought,—namely, any weak or assailable point by which a captive might escape, or an enemy gain entrance. Nor was his despondency at all relieved, when he found himself lodged in a dungeon at least a hundred feet below the surface of

the earth. There he was left in darkness and in solitude, chained to the ground, and carefully barred and bolted in.

And yet, strange to say, his spirit was by no means bowed or humbled; nay, it was rather roused and strengthened. He had not been able to meet the glance of the Christian minstrel, but death, captivity, torture, and all the evils either of this world or of the next, served only to nerve him the more. He trusted in *himself*, and *himself* did not desert him.

At length the gates of the vault slowly opened, creaking on their rusty hinges, and Sir Hildebrand appeared, accompanied by twelve tormentors, each bearing some horrible instrument of torture.

"Villain!" said the baron, "is this the way that you repay my hospitality?"

"I am ignorant," cried the knight, "of what crime you lay to my charge. You had better spare your words and come to action; those gentlemen are evidently impatient. The curse of Zernebock be upon them and you!"

As he uttered the last words they seemed to be repeated by a deep and loud echo, whilst a peal of thunder rolled under the foundations of the castle, and it tottered from its summit to its base.

"Well," said Sir Edred, enjoying the astonishment, not unmixed with terror, which was visible on the countenances of his unwelcome guests, "are you afraid of a man chained down to the ground? What is it to you that I spared your life when you were in my power beneath the shadow of the Zornbaum? Has Sir Hildebrand turned craven?"

"The Zornbaum?" cried the baron, the whole scene rising vividly before him, whilst a supernatural and irresistible horror crept over his senses—"the Zornbaum?" and he gasped for breath. "And where wast thou?"

"Where I was is nothing to thee. I was near enough to have slain thee, and carried thy head to King Alured, who would, doubtless, have given me his daughter's hand as my reward. But if thou desirest to know where I was, I will tell thee. I was in the Zornbaum."

As Sir Hildebrand reflected on all that had happened at the time in question, as well as the strange sound which he had just heard, and the strange tremor he had just experienced, he determined to defer—at least, for the present—his destined vengeance. Nay, as he gazed on the stern, calm, fierce, yet contemptuous aspect of his prisoner, the thought passed through his mind that he might perhaps be in the presence of Zernebock himself. He might be excused for the idea; for it was not the first time that men had imagined they could detect a strong family resemblance between the Knight of Drontheim and his reputed ancestor, many of whose statues, it is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, were then in unimpaired existence.

"I will leave thee for the present," said the baron; and desiring two of his attendants to unbind the captive's hands, and give him food and water, he departed to hold counsel with his familiar.

The familiar was, however, out of humour, because the knight had in the late foray acted in opposition to his advice, and refused to make any answer. Next day being Sunday, on which day the evil spirit was always silent, he determined to wait till Monday ere he troubled his counsellor again.

And Edred was thus reprieved; though of this he was not aware. He knew, indeed, that either he or his patron fiend had succeeded in terrifying his captor, and that he was for the present spared; but how long Sir Hildebrand's fears might last, or what might be the treatment on which that worthy would finally decide, he had no conception.

He had lain ruminating for some time on his position and prospects—it might be one or it might be six hours, for he was not in a mood to count the time—when a side door softly but rapidly opened, and one of the tormentors entered, bearing a lamp in one hand and a dagger in the other.

"Welcome!" cried Edred; "thrice welcome! Do thy work speedily and workmanly; I hate boggling."

"Hush!" replied the tormentor. "Hush! the very floors have ears in this magic castle. Silence, and listen! I know by the mark which I saw erewhile upon thy breast that thou art dear to my master's MASTER; nor did I hear unmoved the deep voice and the deep thunder; and, therefore, I come to free thee."

"I come to free thee," uttered the deep voice; or was it the echo of the dungeon vault? The captive knew not, recked not; but availing himself silently of his new friend's good offices, he rose, and following his guide through a narrow winding passage which penetrated the northern mountain, after a steep and difficult journey of more than three miles, he found himself on the summit of the ridge in open daylight.

"We part here," said his guide; "I to seek the camp of the Avars; thou, no doubt to return to the court of Alured. But let me warn thee not to take the direct route to Arlstadt; since, if thou dost, thou wilt assuredly be recaptured by my late lord. I advise thee to take yonder path, which leads far away to the north-west. When thou hast distanced Schreckenstein thou mayst make for Arlstadt."

Sir Edred thanked his companion for his services, and receiving from him one of the daggers which he wore in his belt, set out at a rapid pace in the direction which he had indicated. In the strength of vigorous manhood and endangered freedom he walked on, through the whole of that day and the ensuing night; nor was it till the day began to dawn that he felt in any degree weary; then nature exerted her rights, and worn out with hunger as much as fatigue, he concealed himself in the centre of a dense thicket, and soon fell into a deep sleep—a sleep which lasted until the dawn of the following day.

On first awaking he could not well remember where he was; but after a few minutes' consideration the reality of his situation became clear to him, and rising, and looking carefully around him, he proceeded as rapidly as on the previous day. Nothing occurred to attract his attention in any way, until, about an hour before noon, he reached an open space in the forest, where a stream sparkled through a soft, rich glade. He was about to drink and pass on, when, happening to look down the valley, he beheld two mules grazing by the side of the brook, and under the shade of the neighbouring trees a man seated on the ground, with a substantial repast spread out before him. The knight immediately turned his steps in the direction of the meal, and was a good deal surprised when the stranger, as he approached, rose and, saluting him courteously, said:

"I am delighted to see you, Sir Knight; I have been expecting you this half hour; pray make me happy by partaking of my simple fare. Nay, do not be alarmed—I am no friend of Sir Hildebrand, or Sir Eustace either. Come, seat yourself and lose no time. You ought to have a good appetite ere this. Fasting and exercise are the best condiments with which I am acquainted."

The provisions were of first-rate excellence, and had they not been so Sir Edred would have been unwilling to cavil at them at that moment. A loaf of the finest white bread, a piece of the best Alpine cheese, a venison pasty, such as the first cook of the present day might have been proud to have executed, a flask of the last Rhenish, and a jar of strong beer from the foot of the Jura, formed a tempting spectacle for a hungry man. So, without staying to resolve any doubts, or put any questions which the singular address of his host might have suggested to him, the Knight of Drontheim commenced a vigorous and well-directed fire, as our modern historians have it, and after a mere show of resistance on the part of the enemy, succeeded, with the aid of his ally, in driving them entirely from the field.

The meal thus despatched, Sir Edred had time to bestow a careful scrutiny on his host. His appearance would have been striking anywhere; but, in the depths of a German forest towards the close of the eighth century, it was singular beyond all expectation or compare. He was not much above the middle stature, and slightly made. His eyes were of a dark grey, and very piercing; his forehead ample, but low; his nose aquiline, and strongly marked; his hair and eyebrows, his whiskers and moustachios, of a jet black; so also was his beard, which flowed down to his waist; the lines of his cheek were graceful, but those of his mouth had at times an unpleasant expression, though when he smiled he showed lips of classical symmetry, and teeth which, for exact regularity and dazzling whiteness, could not be surpassed. He was dressed in the richest manner according to the Oriental fashion; but though the green turban, thickly studded with splendid jewels, denoted him to be an opulent shereef, or descendant of the impostor Mohammed, his long ringlets seemed at variance with the rest of his costume.

"With whom have I had the honour of speaking?" said Sir Edred; "or rather, I should say, to whom do I owe the rich repast of which I have just partaken?"

"My name is Mohammed ben Ibrahim, great grandson of the Prophet of Allah."

"And what makes so illustrious a stranger travel in these wild parts without an escort?"

"I have business to do which I can do best alone. I am a physician and an alchymist, and am desirous of ascertaining certain facts which are needful to the perfection of our science; and I am also desirous of seeing more of the world than I could were I not to make my journeys in solitude. Besides, my own arm is strong, and considering the character of you Europeans, and my own resources of one kind or other, I am safer alone altogether, than virtually alone, as I should be, in the company of unknown strangers."

"But you do not look strong, and you are, I may almost say, unarmed."

A strange smile passed over the stranger's face as he drew a rapier of

the finest Damascus temper, and bared an arm which, though small, was one mass of the strongest muscle.

"There breathes not the warrior," said he, "whether Frank or Arab, but would find an equal in Mohammed ben Ibrahim. Wouldst wish to have proof of my strength? Sir Knight?" And ere Edred could reply, he tore up a young oak some ten foot high by the roots, and threw it into the air as though it had been a mere walking-stick.

Sir Edred needed no further proof of the Arab's ability to defend himself.

"And soon we had better make the best of our way towards Arlstadt, or we may be overtaken by the followers of your late host—though in good sooth they would find the meeting with us but a sorry bargain," said Mohammed.

The strangers now fell into conversation, which became more and more interesting, till at length Sir Edred, without being fully aware of the fact, found that he had confided everything to his companion. He seemed, indeed, to be perfectly fascinated by the wily Asiatic; and, ere the sun had gone down below the horizon, he had related everything which had happened since his arrival at Arlstadt: nay, more than this—he had opened his whole heart, and disclosed all his wishes, all his hopes, and all his fears.

"I am glad to have met at length with one honest man among the Franks," observed Mohammed, as the knight ended his communication; "very glad indeed; and, by the beard and bones of the holy Prophet, it shall go hard but I will serve you. Nay, my good friend, you need not look so surprised; you are an honest man—the first that I have found in Christendom. Others desire what you desire, and have not the moral courage to put their desires into execution; others have the courage to act as you have done, but want the courage to avow it. I admire you—you are the first man that I have seen worthy to be my friend since I left Cordova; give me your hand." And he grasped and shook it in a manner that made the stout Northman fully aware of his strength.

After a short halt, to refresh both themselves and the mules, they moved forward once more, nor did they rest for the night until some hours after sunset. They rose early the next morning, and, after a hearty meal, proceeded on their way without any adventure, till the shades of evening fell around them.

"We may take a good night's rest now," said the alchymist, "provided we can find a safe retreat."

This was soon obtained. A narrow path led them from the more beaten track which they had lately been travelling through the dense forest, till after following it for about a mile, they found themselves in a small valley, surrounded and sheltered on all sides by lofty trees. On the opposite side to that by which they entered the ground, after a steep ascent, formed a terrace, defended in the rear by lofty cliffs, which rose behind it in a semicircular form. Down the centre of this rocky screen dashed a stream, which, after various cascades, formed a pool below the terrace; and the cliffs were studded with trees and bushes, which spread their shadows far over the terrace. Here we must leave the travellers for awhile.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER XV.

Throw not the flower away!
Oh, take it back; it will have charms for thee
When joy a stranger to thy heart may be.
A moment stay;—
A finger light as mine,
A hand as fair,
Shall such a flower one day entwine
Among the tresses of her hair;
Before the meekness of whose brow
Thy lofty looks will bow.
When, thus bedeck'd, comes one so fair to see,
Think of the hand which gives this flower to thee.

"GIUDITTA TO ADONAI.

"Oh, I am so happy! for ere long joy is to be thy lot. One more day, and then we part for a longer time than before. But I must first show thee the dwelling of thy bride. I told her to look at thy brow during that sacred service. Did not her eyes touch thine? Thou hast not forgotten her soul! To see her is to love her. She was to enter our convent: I was not. She has not entered, but I have. The veil was for me, then; and, when I have shown thee the way, I will go home. That word has a good meaning for me; it echoes among the walls of Sta. Maria Novella! Meet me in the Corso before I go; I am always there."

A note, in the above words, was put into my hand by Ippolito, who said he had received it from a peasant-girl, who kissed him. I read it with more pain than I had suffered during all my distresses. It probed the wound which healeth not.

I was in the street when the note reached me, and, when I had read it, I wandered from house to house, my heart suddenly numb and hard, my thoughts shadowy as thin vapour. I cried two or three times, not as I once saw Giuditta cry, but with an eye bent heavenward, and pale, emaciated cheek, the throat making a mockery of laughter by its inarticulate utterance. A flower-girl skipped up to me as I walked along, and gaily presented me with a camilla, white and pure as the feet of a virgin at the altar. I flung it from me sullenly, and begged the girl to go. She ran off to pick up the flower. A basket, holding others, hung at her arm, and she wore the light straw hat of a peasant. She returned to me singing the above verses. I did not know her at first, because she looked happy; but when she gave me back the flower, and smiled, and sang, I saw Giuditta in the flower-girl. When she had finished, she took me to a doorway, leading me by the arm, and said, with a look of the most exquisite gladness, "It is here that Adora is." With the same look of joy she kissed her hand to me, and skipped away. I could not follow her, but sat myself down on the steps to weep over her joy—the unconscious woe of the broken-hearted.

But my mind wandered to Adora; the instant that her form was within view of my inward vision, a deep calm came over me, and poured into my breast the joys of a world to come, such as I had felt in childhood on a summer's eve, at the hour of music and prayer. She seemed my divinity, was omnipresent in my mind, the director of its laws, its pervading providence, the fountain of its hope, its love. She was a divinity whose rule engendered in me the pure and perfect, in whose empire there could be no rebellion, no seat of a fallen and unhappy, but only one extended sphere of bliss. If evil had ever prevailed within her enchanted dominion, she would charm it into slumber; her influence all harmonious, the resistless virtues through which its exercise had force, the fine ideal of attributes divine, selected without blemish from the mixture of good and evil which governs a lovely and immortal world.

My love was not like that of man, it was adoration; an hallowed consciousness from above; the contemplation of objects afar; of beauty which lingered on the distant horizon of heaven; of charms unapproachable, save to the longings of hope.

With my eyes drooping towards the ground, the moments fled, but my mind was stationary on her. As in former states of intense feeling, the enthusiasm increased until its touch thrilled on those perilous chords which reason could not harmonise, and whence no sweet internal melody could be drawn. Within the depths of my mind lay an ill-accorded lyre, as in the recesses of Æolian caves, which resound not the gentle waftings of the breeze, but, once opened, disgorge the hurricane.

Time was, when, through pride, I studied to conceal from the eye of man such dismal region of my inward being; but it is no dishonour to resemble Nature in all things. She has her haunts of eternal winter, where devastation alone exists; or if life springs up within them it is monstrous, almost unnatural. And these fearful wilds are often found in the midst of her most cultivated places. This is the insanity of Nature; and it is only her loftiest sons who are created after her, to reflect her entire proportions.

The whirlwind uproots the mountain pine, and bears that colossus through the airy plains; it diverts the cataract from its fall into the chasm, and hurries it in spray to the passing clouds; it drives the rivers back on the swollen rills; it devastates all that summer sweetens. So, in the mind insane, the unbound fancy uproots the tree of knowledge, drives the flow of passion into cloudy regions, arrests the tide of sense, and scatters its associated thoughts in wild confusion.

While I sat, the gates of the palace were unclosed, and empty carriages drove into the court. I stood up; my musings gave way as the noise and bustle of domestics and equipages increased about me. I stood up in an agony of excitement lest Adora should be among the number of those who were to depart. The inner door of the palace was shortly opened, and two females entered the first carriage, which drove away; they were Melissa, and her mother, Dione.

There was another party also about to quit the mansion; agitated within, though outwardly calm, I awaited the next scene, and it was not long behind—the remaining carriage drew up. Theonoe ascended the steps and disappeared also.

This, then, I argued, is the Marsino Palace, and signs of mourning outside confirmed my suspicion—a hatchment was hung above the gates.

Could I rely on poor Giuditta, that Adora was there? Who was Adora, that she should be thus intimately allied with those whom I viewed as my relations, in the absence of closer ties? At the question a thought struck me, and sparks flew across my eyes from its stunning blow. I said, should Ippolito be my father's child, and Dione his mother, is it not now certain, from the resemblance between the two, and from the same roof affording shelter to both, that Dione is likewise Adora's mother? If I had to resign Melissa, as being my spiritual sister, how much less could I think further of Adora?

The doors had not closed. I walked forward, and was recognised by the domestic as I inquired for the Countess of Marsino, and was ushered by him into a private room, where Adora sat. My head was steady for a moment, as I beheld the only face on earth that was beautiful to me. She rose from her seat—she approached me, and my heart in a moment filled with a brother's love. She stood still an instant, raised her arms, and uttered, "It is he!" With these words she fell forward. I caught her in my arms, kissed her with the suppressed affection of all those years, and placed her on a couch, when I was reminded of another, over whose sleep I had once leaned with so much unhappiness. How the loss of that hour seemed replaced in the present. There was now a tear—one tear which grew larger under the lid of Adora's still closed eyes. I dared not kiss it away; the brother's joy was over—was in the backward rolling past.

Æthra entered; I stood before her, horror-struck, my nostrils dilated, my eyes and mouth open, my knees shaking! I was about to fly, when suddenly she stood steadily before me, fixed her eyes, and fell. I leaned over her, forgetting the one I loved for the one I had injured, and raised her head, while on one knee I gave her the support of my feeble arm. At this juncture Giuditta ran into the room, and with a look of sense and love seized the hand of Adora and locked it in mine, while she took Æthra to her arms, and in that embrace restored sanctity to the impure.

Chapter XVI.

On that day, truly, it pleased Heaven to visit me with divine affliction; a cloud descended on my soul, and bore me upwards through regions where objects of sense were not. Yes, a dark cloud enveloped my soul, and carried me over the way from this world to that where all is doubt and hurry. Strange; I feel, that, on recurring to the period in question, my faculties touch on the tender seat of my delusion, and, for a moment, the old disorder is renewed. But the dangerous emotion is over; like the dying reverberation of a discord, the evil has lasted but a few moments; long enough to prompt my memory, however, to a rehearsal of each successive event.

During this visitation I sallied forth into the open country, unconscious of the presence of my reason. A supernatural impulse guided me as if it were on its way to the holy sepulchre; and I followed passively in its path. I laboured under a load of sin, which glided on to receive some promised relief. My body felt unconcerned; it was but the vessel which held the repentance; and the impulse which it followed was unconscious of toil. The objects of the journey seemed afar, but their distance to diminish, though the means of my progress were unfelt; for the sole

emotion was confined to the presence of a glowing spirit conducting itself from pain.

I wandered for many days, and at length sat before moss-grown walls; it was the Ferrini domain. The once lord of it was no more; but his mother and sister lived there in the Lombard plains; Dione the mourner, and Melissa the wife of another, and a parent. There, enshrined amidst Corinthian columns and gardens, where the mulberry flourished, and the orange grew, dwelt in peace the one I had so loved. There she, perhaps, thanked Heaven that she had escaped my toils; there she blessed her children, the witnesses of present gratitude. I sat before the moss-grown walls, and wept as I thought of the past. But away with the recollection; it overwhelms me again!

Ippolito was at my side; when I recognised him I felt that my pilgrimage was at an end. I entered the new Ferrini villa; Dione received me with open arms; I was still her child. I told her all my troubles; I heard with returning joy of the welfare of her daughter, the lofty Duchess of Valisneri, whom I saw not. With tears she announced to me the death of her son, which news I heard with sorrow.

I confided to Dione my love for Adora Abarbanel; by which name I made allusion to the beautiful novice. She entered into my views with a tone of parental tenderness; but, though she blessed me and earnestly prayed for my happiness, her looks were expressive of surprise. She, however, continued to assure me of her belief that it was not yet too late to claim the hand of the betrothed—the intended bride of Heaven. Her words affected me deeply; I confided in her as the prophetess of my hopes, for whatever she thought appeared to me certain to be accomplished.

Observing that her countenance was still excited, I inquired why she had shown surprise when I mentioned the Signorina Abarbanel's name.

"Because," replied she, "I am her nearest relation."

"How so?" I said; my eyes now suffused from emotions of joy and wonder, the previous words of Dione having obliterated my former fears.

"Her late mother was my own sister; she was one of three Piccolomini," replied Dione.

"What is her real name?"

"You know, for you have spoken it already—Adora Abarbanel."

"Is Adora really her name?"

"It is."

I was astounded; my mind underwent an immediate revulsion; I at once thought of what Angus had said to Ippolito in former years, whom he then called by Adora's name. Had he known her? It must have been so, or he could not have pronounced a name which, given her by us owing to her likeness to Ippolito, had finally proved to be her own.

"Has she a brother?" I asked.

"No," said Dione, calmly.

"Do you not know who Ippolito is?" said I.

"No."

"Then my father was mistaken."

Dione scarcely heeded these words. I added, after a brief silence:

"Have I then your consent to this alliance?"

"If she loves you, it is not, as I said just now, too late; the veil is not

yet taken. Strange result of all my cares! I who, at the instance of her father, have had her educated for a convent that she might become the bride of Heaven, have not the heart after all to withhold her from you."

And at that moment her thoughts quitted the world to be with my father; she was in secret prayer.

"Bless you, kind, indulgent, forgiving friend. Where is she to be found? Is she still with Æthra, at Milan?"

"How know you so? She is; and the difficulty lies there. She is at this time finally consigned to her cousin, Æthra, by her father; in a few weeks she becomes a nun."

"What can I do? Oh, advise me!"

"I know not how to advise or how to act. She is not allowed to quit Milan any more. The visit she lately paid at Florence to Theonoe was the last that was to be permitted. It would be vain, therefore, to summon her here."

"Do help me!"

"Proceed to Milan. See Æthra yourself. Reveal all to her—she is kind-hearted—and tell her that, whatever Adora determines on as best for her own welfare, shall have my blessing."

I was sick at heart, and at these words felt all my malady.

"It was I who killed Marsino," I said, mournfully.

Dione looked at me with a glance of severity and pity, the only unpleasing look I had ever known in her. I sank upon the earth, no longer able to sustain myself under so heavy a load of debasement. As I lay thus in ashes and sackcloth, I muttered the names of all I had injured, of all I had destroyed.

Dione raised me, and wept with me.

"I deserve not Adora," said I. "She shall pursue in self-denial her narrow way to Heaven. I will see her no more."

I sat silent, and reflected confusedly.

"She has not a mother to rescue her—to save her! Who is her father? When did her mother die?"

"Her father," said Dione, still grieving, "is a Spaniard of high condition; but, alas! on one subject, at least, he is insane. He lost my poor sister—nay, all his children, except dear Adora—at Reggio. It must be thirteen years ago. All were engulphed together."

"By the earthquake?"

"Yes."

"The earthquake at Reggio—thirteen years ago! My father was there. Come here, Ippolito."

"Don Abarbanel was buried alive," continued Dione, little heeding me. "He succeeded in rescuing himself and Adora only from the ruins. But his reason forsook him, for since that hour he has lived in the belief that, like Lazarus and his Saviour, he also rose again from the dead."

I whispered a few words, but could not utter, for I felt choked. Dione observed my agitation, which was great, and, not in the least understanding its cause, became alarmed. I had made the discovery of Ippolito's parentage, and it carried with it the solution of his extraordinary likeness to Adora. Dione had not yet seen him. He was waiting in the ante-room; so I made her a sign to admit him.

He entered with calm looks.

"Behold that sweet face," said I, wildly; "tell me at a glance who it is."

"What means this? It is Adora." And she snatched him to her arms. But on looking again at his face she slighty repelled him, and added doubtingly, "No, she is rather older; besides, you would not have done so."

I desired Ippolito to retire.

"You have said enough; no further proof is to be desired. In mitigation of my offences—of all the evil I have done you and yours—above all, in return for your merciful forgiveness, receive another child unto your heart: Ippolito, brother of Adora!"

Shortly afterwards I communicated to her his touching history. She therein heard, for the first time, particulars of how her sister perished; and from her heart she rejoiced that my father who had so loved her, had closed the eyes of the lost one.

Dione manifested the deepest fondness for Ippolito, whom she caressed with maternal love, and he instinctively returned her affection. She obtained from him the ready promise that he would often visit her; but at my request she, for the present, kept him in the dark respecting his birth. I wished to reserve that knowledge as a surprise for him at his first interview with the real Adora.

I did not prolong my stay, though fain would I have done so, for I observed with concern that Dione was at last altered by time, a change now suddenly wrought through long-continued illness. I had a presentiment, which, alas! was verified, that I should not see her more. Restored to health myself by her healing kindness, I departed amid earnest and repeated blessings.

"Come, Ippolito," I said, "you have found a mother in her who has ever been one to me; and now, assisted by the will of Him in whose presence such wonders are wrought, you shall receive a sister. Yes; it is possible that the ties you so longed to realise in me, may yet be in reserve."

The Vestibule.

Chapter I.

All glory is not like that of the sun, which dazzles the beholder; there is glory of a milder kind in which the grateful heart delights, whose light is soft and thrilling as a mother's love. Blessed is the mourner who feels its rays, and, resigned to what has been ordained, submits cheerfully to the trials of misfortune.

From the hour in which I saw that Adora loved me, I ceased to entertain a thought of wrong; it was impossible for me to feel her love and persist in a course of sin. This was the proof of love! Having experienced it, I knew my safety, and feared no more my father's terrible warnings, which till then had sounded in my ears unceasingly, like the confessions of a tormented soul.

This gave me a new feeling, a positive taste for the happiness which virtue secures. That happiness I enjoyed; most truly was I blessed! What love was mine, that it should be as much greater than I had felt in youth, as heaven is greater than earth!

But think not that I boast of it; think not that I would display the glory which I at last inherited, the mild glory of love. It was conferred upon me, not as a worldly gift, but that I might be enabled through its holy light to suffer for myself! The career which I had chosen, or rather as I now believe, which had been mapped out for me by the hand of mercy, was not to close thus propitiously, nor to be thus unduly rewarded. Suffering had hitherto been my object; I had caused others to pass through its ordeal on my account; henceforth I was to be the sufferer. I was to bear the pangs which others had endured at my hands; to learn by experience of a novel kind, that although the intellect could be no further gratified by gazing at the face of sorrow, there were yet means inexhaustible of awakening that selfish sorrow—that undimmed mirror of the past—regret! How else could a soul so fallen meet renovation? Virtue was to be my conqueror; penitence my path to hope; divine mercy my destined portion. If my early life were strange, how much more so was my subsequent history.

Adora, then, was the cousin of Æthra! In a state of frenzy, I had continued at the Marsino Palace until these two fair beings had recovered from their surprise. Adora, with my assistance, arose, and stood in the meekest attitude that love and grief can assume, her open hands together, her eyes directed above. The countess was less natural; she had more self-reliance, less dependence on Heaven. In the presence of Giuditta and her cousin she refrained from all further expression of her passion; she respected opinion, and at that moment her sister and Adora stood to her in the relation of the world. She remembered that she was a woman; that character concerned her much; that a passion which she could not indulge, was worthless in comparison with her good name. It was inexpedient to repeat the abandoned exclamation; if disposed to do so, the chilling touch of prudence set the wavering inclination at rest. Her struggle was hysterical; she breathed hard, and gulped the air. Her will paralysed her tongue, but every other muscle of expression spoke convulsively. Passion was thus eloquent, though silenced.

What happened to me after this scene is already related.

What compensation could I offer to the frail and forgiving Æthra for my part in the past? To beseech her pardon, and receiving that, to implore the forgiveness of Heaven, was my first thought. I wrote to the Lady Trivulzio, desired her to proceed to my castle, and invite the countess and her cousin to visit her there, calling them my relatives and friends. I told her of my desire to return to my country, and be united to the most adorable of women.

My relative was of so kindly a nature that I felt sure of her compliance; and I was right: she was overjoyed at the prospect I had pictured, and wrote by the same conveyance to the countess as to me.

I refrained from calling at the Marsino Palace for a time: it was not want of love, but of courage, by which I was deterred. I put off this restraint, however, on receiving my despatches from Volterra. I had wished, perhaps, to prepare for myself a less cold reception than I had a right to expect, considering all—and, above all, my passion for another, which I could not disguise. I had found out the state of Adora's feelings when we had met last; the discovery had helped to diffuse over my soul a present calm, a joy vast as tranquil. I now hastened to the palace, and was conducted to a boudoir, which opened out of the large saloon.

The countess was alone; she did not look me in the face; and, altogether, received me with more ceremony than could have been foreseen.

"I have received a letter this morning," said Æthra, at length, smiling, "from the Signora Trivulzio, inviting me and my cousin into Tuscany. I have some scruple in accepting this proposal from a stranger, especially from a relative of yours, and that in your own castle, after what has so recently transpired."

I was silent, knowing not how best to reply.

"However," she continued, "it is known in Milan that you were driven into the duel without explanation, and that you conducted yourself with great generosity during the fatal struggle."

I was all astonishment; how could this have been known?

"It may surprise you," continued Æthra, "that you have not been summoned by the authorities to an account of what occurred. It is only since we met that I have myself heard the particulars: the second of the late count has been a friend to you indeed! When your life was despaired of, he deposed before the government that, without other cause than a suspicion whispered into his ear by the assassin who stabbed you, the count had sent you a challenge to meet him in one hour. This statement,—the cruelty of his suspicions of me,—the dissipated life he pursued in my absence,—these circumstances combined, brought the inquiry to a speedy issue, and rendered even your appearance unnecessary at that time."

"Strange," exclaimed I.

"One word more," said the young widow; "I thought your behaviour harsh at my husband's tomb, considering how inextricably you were mixed up with my misfortunes."

What skill, thought I, has this frail creature exercised in the present interview. I sank on one knee, and said, "Forgive me, my troubles had overwhelmed my reason."

"You have my pardon," she said, "and I give it freely, on the understanding that a veil is thrown over the past."

"O madam!" I replied, glad thus easily to escape her censure, "all I ask of you is pardon. Give me but that, and, forget what else I may, your generosity will ever be present to my recollection."

"Let us say no more, then, on the past," said the countess, presenting with grace and dignity her hand, to which I did homage. At the same moment the door opened; taken by surprise I started back. The second wing of the door moved in front of me, and hid me for an instant from sight. The person who entered embraced the countess before he could be warned of my presence. The conversation and manner of the countess had been strange; but this was stranger still. She saw my thoughts, and, throwing off her confusion with extraordinary readiness, said, "My cousin."

He was the count's second; but her cousin?

We bowed coldly, but not inimically. I asked permission to call again shortly, glad to get away, and, closing the door, passed into the saloon which led to the staircase. In a second the countess followed, and, whispering, "Call again at three," retired once more into her boudoir, to join her cousin.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER X.

THE BANQUETING-HALL.

THE banqueting-hall lay immediately under the long gallery, corresponding with it in all but height; and though in this respect it fell somewhat short of the magnificent upper room, it was quite lofty enough to admit of a gallery of its own for spectators and minstrels. Great pains had been taken in decorating the hall for the occasion. Between the forest of stags' horns that branched from the gallery-rails were hung rich carpets, intermixed with garlands of flowers; and banners, painted with the arms of the Assheton family, were suspended from the corners. Over the fireplace, where, despite the advanced season, a pile of turf and wood was burning, were hung two panoplies of arms, and above them, on a bracket, was set a complete suit of mail, once belonging to Richard Assheton, the first possessor of the mansion. On the opposite wall hung two remarkable portraits, the one representing a religious votaress, in a loose robe of black, with wide sleeves, holding a rosary and missal in her hand, and having her brow and neck entirely concealed by the wimple in which her head and shoulders were enveloped. Such of her features as could be seen were of extraordinary loveliness, though of a voluptuous character, the eyes being dark and languishing, and shaded by long lashes, and the lips carnation-hued and full. This was the fair votaress Isole de Heton, who brought such scandal on the abbey in the reign of Henry VI. The other portrait was that of an abbot, in the white gown and scapulary of the Cistercian order. The countenance was proud and stern, but tinctured with melancholy. In a small shield at one corner the arms were blazoned—argent, a fess between three mullets, sable, pierced of the field, a crescent for difference—proving it to be the portrait of John Paslew. Both pictures had been found in the abbot's lodgings when taken possession of by Richard Assheton, but they owed their present position to his descendant, Sir Ralph, who, discovering them in an out-of-the-way closet, where they had been cast aside, and struck with their extraordinary merit, hung them up as above stated.

The long oaken table, usually standing in the middle of the hall, had been removed to one side, to allow free scope for dancing and other pastimes, but it was still devoted to hospitable uses, being covered with

trenchers and drinking-cups, and spread for a substantial repast. Near it stood two carvers, with aprons round their waists, brandishing long knives, while other yeomen of the kitchen and cellar were at hand to keep the trenchers well supplied and the cups filled with strong ale, or bragget, as might suit the taste of the guests. Nor were these the only festive preparations. The upper part of the hall was reserved for Sir Ralph's immediate friends; and here, on a slightly-raised elevation, stood a cross table, spread for a goodly supper, the snowy napery being ornamented with wreaths and ropes of flowers, and shining with costly vessels. At the lower end of the room, beneath the gallery, which it served to support, was a Gothic screen, embellishing an open armory, which made a grand display of silver plates and flagons. Through one of the doorways contrived in this screen the May-day revellers were ushered into the hall by old Adam Whitworth, the white-headed steward.

"I pray you be seated, good masters, and you, too, comely dames," said Adam, leading them to the table, and assigning each a place with his wand. "Fall to, and spare not, for it is my honoured master's desire you should sup well. You will find that venison pasty worth a trial, and the baked red deer in the centre of the table is a noble dish. The fellow to it was served at Sir Ralph's own table at dinner, and was pronounced excellent. I pray you try it, masters. Here, Ned Scargill, mind your office, good fellow, and break me that deer. And you, Paul Pimlot, exercise your craft on the venison pasty."

And as trencher after trencher was rapidly filled by the two carvers, who demeaned themselves in their task like men acquainted with the powers of rustic appetite, the old steward addressed himself to the dames.

"What can I do for you, fair mistresses?" he said. "Here be sack possets, junkets and cream, for such as like them—French puffs and Italian puddings, right good, I warrant you, and especially admired by my honourable good lady. Indeed, I am not sure she hath not lent a hand herself in their preparation. Then here be fritters in the court fashion, made with curds of sack posset, eggs, and ale, and seasoned with nutmeg and pepper. You will taste them, I am sure, for they are favourites with our sovereign lady the Queen. Here Gregory, Dickon—bestir yourselves, knaves, and pour forth a cup of sack for each of these dames. As you drink, mistresses, neglect not the health of our honourable good master Sir Ralph and his lady. It is well; it is well. I will convey to them both your dutiful good wishes. But I must see all your wants supplied. Good Dame Openshaw, you have nought before you. Be prevailed upon to taste these dropt raisins or a fond pudding. And you, too, sweet Dame Tetlow. Squire Nicholas gave me special caution to take care of you; but the injunction was unneeded, as I should have done so without it. Another cup of canary to Dame Tetlow, Gregory. Fill to the brim, knave—to the very brim. To the health of Squire Nicholas," he added, in a low tone, as he handed the brimming goblet to the blushing dame; "and be sure and tell him, if he questions you, that I obeyed his behests to the best of my ability. I pray you taste this pippin-jelly, dame. It is as red as rubies, but not so red as your lips; or some leach of almonds, which, lily-white though it be, is not to be compared with the teeth that shall touch it."

"Odds heart! mester steward, yo mun ha' larnt that protty speech fro' th' squoire himself," replied Dame Tetlow, laughing.

"It may be the recollection of something said to me by him, brought to mind by your presence," replied Adam Whitworth, gallantly. "If I can serve you in aught else, sign to me, dame. Now, knaves, fill the cups—ale or bragget, at your pleasure, masters. Drink, and stint not, and you will the better please your liberal entertainer and my honoured master."

Thus exhorted, the guests set seriously to work to fulfil the hospitable intentions of the provider of the feast. Cups flowed fast and freely, and ere long little was left of the venison pasty but the outer crust, and nothing more than a few fragments of the baked red deer. The lighter articles then came in for a share of attention, and salmon from the Ribble, jack, trout, and eels from the Hodder and Calder, boiled, broiled, stewed, and pickled, and of delicious flavour, were discussed with infinite relish. Puddings and pastry were left to more delicate stomachs—the solids only being in request with the men. Hitherto, the demolition of the viands had given sufficient employment; but now, the edge of appetite beginning to be dulled, tongues were unloosed, and much merriment prevailed. More than eighty in number, the guests were dispersed without any regard to order; and thus the chief actors in the revel were scattered promiscuously about the table, diversifying it with their gay costumes. Robin Hood sat between two pretty female morris-dancers, whose partners had got to the other end of the table; while Ned Huddlestone, the representative of Friar Tuck, was equally fortunate, having a buxom dame on either side of him, towards whom he distributed his favours with singular impartiality. As porter to the abbey, Ned made himself at home, and, next to Adam Whitworth, was perhaps the most important personage present, continually roaring for ale, and pledging the damsels around him. From the way he went on, it seemed highly probable he would be under the table before supper was over; but Ned Huddlestone, like the burly priest whose gown he wore, had a stout bullet-head, proof against all assaults of liquor; and the copious draughts he swallowed, instead of subduing him, only tended to make him more uproarious. Blessed also with lusty lungs, his shouts of laughter made the roof ring again. But if the strong liquor failed to make due impression upon him, the like cannot be said of Jack Roby, who, it will be remembered, took the part of the Fool, and who, having drunk overmuch, mistook the hobby-horse for a real steed, and, in an effort to bestride it, fell headforemost on the floor, and, being found incapable of rising, was carried out to an adjoining room, and laid on a bench. This, however, was the only case of excess, for though the Sherwood foresters emptied their cups often enough to heighten their mirth, none of them seemed the worse for what they drank. Lawrence Blackrod, Mr. Parker's keeper, had fortunately got next to his old flame, Sukey Worseley; while Phil Rawson, the forester, who enacted Will Scarlet, and Nancy Holt, between whom an equally tender feeling subsisted, had likewise got together. A little beyond them sat the gentleman-usher and parish-clerk, Sampson Harrop, who, piquing himself on his good manners, drank very sparingly, and was content to sup on sweetmeats and a bowl of fleetings, as curds separated from whey are termed in this district. Tom the piper and his companion, the taborer, ate for the next week, but were somewhat more

sparing in the matter of drink, their services as minstrels being required later on. Thus the various guests enjoyed themselves according to their bent, and universal hilarity prevailed. It would be strange indeed if it had been otherwise, for, what with the good cheer and the bright eyes around them, the rustics had attained a point of felicity not likely to be surpassed. Of the numerous assemblage more than half were of the fairer sex, and of these the greater portion were young and good-looking; while, in the case of the morris-dancers, their natural charms were heightened by their fanciful attire.

Before supper was half over it became so dark that it was found necessary to illuminate the great lamp suspended from the centre of the roof, while other lights were set on the board, and two flaming torches placed in sockets on either side of the chimney-piece. Scarcely was this accomplished when the storm came on, much to the surprise of the weatherwise, who had not calculated upon such an occurrence, not having seen any indications whatever of it in the heavens. But all were too comfortably sheltered, and too well employed, to pay much attention to what was going on without, and, unless when a flash of lightning more than usually vivid dazzled the gaze, or a peal of thunder more appalling than the rest broke overhead, no alarm was expressed, even by the women. To be sure, a little pretty trepidation was now and then evinced by the younger damsels, but even this was only done with the view of exacting attention on the part of their swains, and never failed in effect. The thunderstorm, therefore, instead of putting a stop to the general enjoyment, only tended to increase it. However, the last peal was loud enough to silence the most uproarious. The women turned pale, and the men looked at each other anxiously, listening to hear if any damage had been done. But as nothing transpired, their spirits revived. A few minutes afterwards word was brought that the Conventual Church had been struck by a thunderbolt, but this was not regarded as a very serious disaster. The bearer of the intelligence was little Jennet, who said she had been caught in the ruins by the storm, and after being dreadfully frightened by the lightning, had seen a bolt strike the steeple, and heard some stones rattle down, after which she ran away. No one thought of inquiring what she had been doing there at the time, but room was made for her at the supper table next to Sampson Harrop, while the good steward, patting her on the head, filled her a cup of canary with his own hand, and gave her some cakes to eat.

"Ey dunna see Alizon," observed the little girl, looking round the table, after she had drunk the wine.

"Your sister is not here, Jennet," replied Adam Whitworth, with a smile. "She is too great a lady for us now. Since she came up with her ladyship from the green she has been treated quite like one of the guests, and has been walking about the garden and ruins all the afternoon with young Mistress Dorothy, who has taken quite a fancy to her. Indeed, for the matter of that, all the ladies seem to have taken a fancy to her, and she is now closeted with Mistress Nutter in her own room."

This was gall and wormwood to Jennet.

"She'll be hard to please when she goes home again, after playing the fine dame here," pursued the steward.

"Then ey hope she'll never come home again," rejoined Jennet, spitefully, "fo' we dunna want fine dames i' our poor cottage."

"For my part I do not wonder Alizon pleases the gentlefolks," observed Sampson Harrop, "since such pains have been taken with her manners and education; and I must say she does great credit to her instructor, who, for reasons unnecessary to mention, shall be nameless. I wish I could say the same for you, Jennet; but though you're not deficient in ability, you've no perseverance or pleasure in study."

"Ey knoa os much os ey care to knoa," replied Jennet, "an more than yo con teach me, Mester Harrop. Why is Alizon always to be thrown i' my teeth?"

"Because she's the best model you can have," rejoined Sampson. "Ah, if I'd my own way wi' ye, lass, I'd mend your temper and manners. But you come of an ill stock, ye saucy hussy."

"Ey come fro' th' same stock as Alizon, onny how," said Jennet.

"Unluckily, that cannot be denied," replied Sampson; "but you're as different from her as light from darkness."

Jennet eyed him bitterly, and then rose from the table.

"Ey'n go," she said.

"No—no; sit down," interposed the good-natured steward. "The dancing and pastimes will begin presently, and you will see your sister. She will come down with the ladies."

"That's the very reason she wishes to go," said Sampson Harrop. "The spiteful little creature cannot bear to see her sister better treated than herself. Go your ways, then. It is the best thing you can do. Alizon would blush to see you here."

"Then ey'n e'en stay an vex her," replied Jennet, sharply; "boh ey winna sit near yo onny longer, Mester Sampson Harrop, who ca' yersel gentleman-usher, boh who are nah gentleman at aw, nor owt like it, boh merely parish-clerk and schoolmester, an a poor schoolmester to boot. Eyn go an sit by Sukey Worseley an Nancy Holt, whom ey see yonder."

"You've found your match, Master Harrop," said the steward, laughing, as the little girl walked away.

"I should account it a disgrace to bandy words with the like of her, Adam," rejoined the clerk, angrily; "but I'm greatly out in my reckoning if she does not make a second Mother Demdike, and worse could not well befal her."

Jennet's society could have been very well dispensed with by her two friends, but she would not be shaken off. On the contrary, finding herself in the way, she only determined the more pertinaciously to remain, and began to exercise all her powers of teasing, which have been described as considerable, and which on this occasion proved eminently successful. And the worst of it was, there was no crushing the plaguy little insect; any effort made to catch her only resulting in an escape on her part, and a new charge on some undefended quarter, with sharper stinging, and more intolerable buzzing than ever.

Out of all patience, Sukey Worseley at length exclaimed, "Ey should loike to see ye swum, crosswise, i' th' Calder, Jennet, as Nance Redferne war this efternoon."

"May be ye would, Sukey," replied the little girl, "boh ey'm nah so likely to be tried that way as yourself, lass; an if ey war swum ey should sink, while yo, wi' your broad back and shouthers, would be sure to float, and then yo'd be counted a witch."

"Heed her not, Sukey," said Blackrod, unable to resist a laugh, though the poor girl was greatly discomfited by this personal allusion; "ye may ha' a broad back o' your own, an the broader the better to my mind, boh mey word on't ye'll never be ta'en fo' a witch. Yo're far too comely."

This assurance was a balm to poor Sukey's wounded spirit, and she replied with a well-pleased smile, "Ey hope ey dunna look like one, Lorry."

"Not a bit, lass," said Blackrod, lifting a huge ale-cup to his lips. "Your health, sweetheart."

"What think ye then o' Nance Redferne?" observed Jennet. "Is she neaw comely?—ay, comelier far than fat, fubsy Sukey here; or than Nancy Holt, wi' her yallo hure and frecklet feace; an yet ye ca' her a witch."

"Ey ca' thee one, theaw feaw little whean—an the dowter—an grandowter o' one—an that's more," cried Nancy. "Freckles i' your own feace, ye mismannert minx."

"Ne'er heed her, Nance," said Phil Rawson, putting his arm round the angry damsel's waist, and drawing her gently down. "Every one to his taste, an freckles and yellow hure are so to mine. So dunna fret about it, an spoil your protty lips wi' pouting. Better ha' freckles o' your feace than spots o' your heart loike that ill-favort little hussy."

"Dunna offend her, Phil," said Nancy Holt, noticing with alarm the malignant look fixed upon her lover by Jennet. "She's dawngerous."

"Firrups tak her!" replied Phil Rawson. "Boh who the dule's that? Ey didna notice him efore, an he's neaw one o' our party."

The latter observation was occasioned by the entrance of a tall personage, in the garb of a Cistercian monk, who issued from one of the doorways in the screen, and glided towards the upper table, attracting general attention and misgiving as he proceeded. His countenance was cadaverous, his lips livid, and his eyes black and deep sunken in their sockets, with a bistre-coloured circle around them. His frame was meagre and bony. What remained of hair on his head was raven black, but either he was bald on the crown, or carried his attention to costume so far as to adopt the priestly tonsure. His forehead was lofty and sallow, and seemed stamped, like his features, with profound gloom. His garments were faded and mouldering, and materially contributed to his ghostly appearance.

"Who is it?" cried Sukey and Nance together.

But no one could answer the question.

"He dusna look loike a bein' o' this warld," observed Blackrod, gaping with alarm, for the stout keeper was easily assailable on the side of superstition; "an there is a mowdy air about him that gies one the shivers to see. Ey've often heerd say the abbey is haanted; an that pale-feaced chap looks loike one o th' owd monks risen fro' his grave to join our revel."

"An see, he looks this way," cried Phil Rawson. "What flaming een! they mey the very flesh crawl o' one's booans."

"Is it a ghost, Lorry?" said Sukey, drawing nearer to the stalwart keeper.

"By th' maskins, lass, ey conna tell," replied Blackrod; "boh whotever it be, ey'll protect ye."

"Tak care o' me, Phil," ejaculated Nancy Holt, pressing close to her lover's side.

"Eigh, that I win," rejoined the forester.

"Ey dunna care for ghosts so long os yo are near me, Phil," said Nancy, tenderly.

"Then ey'n never leave ye, Nance," replied Phil.

"Ghost or not," said Jennet, who had been occupied in regarding the new comer attentively, "ey'n go an speak to it. Ey'm nah afeerd, if yo are."

"Eigh do, Jennet, that's a brave little lass," said Blackrod, glad to be rid of her in any way.

"Stay!" cried Adam Whitworth, coming up at the moment, and overhearing what was said; "you must not go near the gentleman. I will not have him molested, or even spoken with, till Sir Ralph appears."

Meanwhile, the stranger, without returning the glances fixed upon him, or deigning to notice any of the company, pursued his way, and sat down in a chair at the upper table.

But his entrance had been witnessed by others besides the rustic guests and servitors. Nicholas and Richard Assheton chanced to be in the gallery at the time, and greatly struck by the singularity of his appearance, immediately descended to make inquiries respecting him. As they appeared below, the old steward advanced to meet them.

"Who the devil have you got there, Adam?" asked the squire.

"It passeth me almost to tell you, Master Nicholas," replied the steward; "and not knowing whether the gentleman be invited or not, I am fain to wait Sir Ralph's pleasure in regard to him."

"Have you no notion who he is?" inquired Richard.

"All I know about him may be soon told, Master Richard," replied Adam. "He is a stranger in these parts, and hath very recently taken up his abode in Wiswall Hall, which has been abandoned of late years, as you know, and suffered to go to decay. Some few months ago an aged couple from Colne, named Hewit, took possession of part of the hall, and were suffered to remain there, though old Katty Hewit, or Mouldheels, as she is familiarly termed by the common folk, is in no very good repute hereabouts, and was driven, it is said, from Colne, owing to her practices as a witch. Be that as it may, soon after these Hewits were settled at Wiswall, comes this stranger, and fixes himself in another part of the hall. How he lives no one can tell, but it is said he rambles all night long, like a troubled spirit, about the deserted rooms, attended by Mother Mouldheels; while in the daytime he is never seen."

"Can he be of sound mind?" asked Richard.

"Hardly so, I should think, Master Richard," replied the steward. "As to who he may be there are many opinions; and some aver he is Francis Paslew, grandson of Francis, brother to the abbot, and being a Jesuit priest—for you know the Paslews have all strictly adhered to the old faith, and that is why they have fled the country and abandoned their residence—he is obliged to keep himself concealed."

"If such be the case, he must be crazed indeed to venture here," observed Nicholas; "and yet I am half inclined to credit the report. Look at him, Dick. He is the very image of the old abbot."

"Yon portrait might have been painted for him," said Richard, gazing at the picture on the wall, and from it to the monk as he spoke; "the very same garb, too."

"There is an old monastic robe up-stairs in the closet adjoining the room occupied by Mistress Nutter," observed the steward, "said to be the garment in which Abbot Paslew suffered death. Some stains are upon it, supposed to be the blood of the wizard Demdike, who perished in an extraordinary manner on the same day."

"I have seen it," cried Nicholas, "and the monk's habit looks precisely like it; and if my eyes deceive me not, is stained in the same manner."

"I see the spots plainly on the breast," cried Richard. "How can he have procured the robe?"

"Heaven only knows," replied the old steward. "It is a very strange occurrence."

"I will go question him," said Richard.

So saying, he proceeded to the upper table, accompanied by Nicholas. As they drew near, the stranger arose, and fixed a grim look upon Richard, who was a little in advance.

"It is the abbot's ghost!" cried Nicholas, stopping, and detaining his cousin. "You shall not address it."

During the contention that ensued, the monk glided towards a side door at the upper end of the hall, and passed through it. So general was the consternation that no one attempted to stay him, nor would any one follow to see whither he went. Released, at length, from the strong grasp of the squire, Richard rushed forth, and not returning, Nicholas, after the lapse of a few minutes, went in search of him, but came back presently, and told the old steward he could neither find him nor the monk.

"Master Richard will be back anon, I dare say, Adam," he remarked; "if not, I will make further search for him. But you had better not mention this mysterious occurrence to Sir Ralph—at all events, not until the festivities are over, and the ladies have retired. It might disturb them. I fear the appearance of this monk bodes no good to our family; and what makes it worse is, it is not the first ill omen that has befallen us to-day. Master Richard was unlucky enough to stand on Abbot Paslew's grave!"

"Mercy on us! that was unlucky indeed!" cried Adam, in great trepidation. "Poor dear young gentleman. Bid him take especial care of himself, good Master Nicholas. I noticed just now that yon fearsome monk regarded him more attentively than you. Bid him be careful, I conjure you, sir. But here comes my honoured master and his guests. Here, Gregory, Dickon, bestir yourselves, knaves, and serve supper at the upper table in a trice."

Any apprehensions Nicholas might entertain for Richard were at this moment relieved, for as Sir Ralph and his guests came in at one door, the young man entered by another. He looked deathly pale. Nicholas put his finger to his lips in token of silence—a gesture which the other signified that he understood.

Sir Ralph and his guests having taken their places at the table, an excellent and plentiful repast was speedily set before them; and if they did not do quite such ample justice to it as the hungry rustics at the lower board had done to the good things provided for them, the cook could not reasonably complain. No allusion whatever being made to the

recent strange occurrence, the cheerfulness of the company was uninterrupted; but the noise in the lower part of the hall had in a great measure subsided, partly out of respect to the host, and partly in consequence of the alarm occasioned by the supposed supernatural visitation. Richard continued silent and preoccupied, and neither ate nor drank; but Nicholas appearing to think his courage would be best sustained by an extra allowance of clary and sack, applied himself frequently to the goblet with that view, and ere long his spirits improved so wonderfully, and his natural boldness was so much increased, that he was ready to confront Abbot Paslew, or any other abbot of them all, wherever they might chance to cross him. In this enterprising frame of mind he drew Richard aside and questioned him as to what had taken place in his pursuit of the mysterious monk.

"You overtook him, Dick, of course?" he said, "and put it to him roundly why he came hither, where neither ghosts nor Jesuit priests, whichever he may be, are wanted. What answered he, eh? Would I had been there to interrogate him! He should have declared how he became possessed of that old motheaten, blood-stained, monkish gown, or I would have unfrocked him, even if he had proved to be a skeleton. But I interrupt you. You have not told me what occurred at the interview?"

"There was no interview," replied Richard, gravely.

"No interview!" echoed Nicholas. "'Sblood, man!—but I must be careful, for Doctor Ormerod and Parson Dewhurst are within hearing, and may lecture me on the wantonness and profanity of swearing. By Saint Gregory de Northbury!—no, that's an oath too, and what is worse, a Popish oath. By—I have several tremendous imprecations at my tongue's end, but they shall not out. It is a sinful propensity, and must be controlled. In a word, then, you let him escape, Dick?"

"If you were so anxious to stay him, I wonder you came not with me," replied Richard; "but you now hold very different language from what you used when I quitted the hall."

"Ah, true—right, Dick," replied Nicholas; "my sentiments have undergone a wonderful change since then. I now regret having stopped you. By my troth! if I meet that confounded monk again, he shall give a good account of himself, I promise him. But what said he to you, Dick? Make an end of your story."

"I have not begun it yet," replied Richard; "but pay attention, and you shall hear what occurred. When I rushed forth, the monk had already gained the entrance-hall. No one was within it at the time, all the serving-men being busied here with the feasting. I summoned him to stay, but he answered not, and, still grimly regarding me, glided towards the outer door, which (I know not by what chance) stood open, and passing through it, closed it upon me. This delayed me a moment; and when I got out, he had already descended the steps, and was moving towards the garden. It was bright moonlight, so I could see him distinctly. And mark this, Nicholas—the two great bloodhounds were running about at large in the court-yard, but they slunk off, as if alarmed at his appearance. The monk had now gained the garden, and was shaping his course swiftly towards the ruined Conventual Church. Determined to overtake him, I quickened my pace; but he gained the old fane

before me, and threaded the broken aisles with noiseless celerity. In the choir he paused and confronted me. When within a few yards of him, I paused, arrested by his fixed and terrible gaze. Nicholas, his look froze my blood. I would have spoken, but I could not. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth for very fear. Before I could shake off this apprehension the figure raised its hand menacingly thrice, and passed into the Lacy Chapel. As soon as he was gone my courage returned, and I followed. The little chapel was brilliantly illuminated by the moon; but it was empty. I could only see the white monument of Sir Henry de Lacy glistening in the pale radiance."

"I must take a cup of wine after this horrific relation," said Nicholas, replenishing his goblet. "It has chilled my blood, as the monk's icy gaze froze yours. Body o' me! but this is strange indeed. Another oath. Lord help me!—I shall never get rid of the infernal—I mean, the evil habit. Will you not pledge me, Dick?"

The young man shook his head.

"You are wrong," pursued Nicholas—"decidedly wrong. Wine gladdeneth the heart of man, and restoreth courage. A short while ago I was downcast as you, melancholy as an owl, and timorous as a kid, but now I am resolute as an eagle, stout of heart, and cheerful of spirit; and all owing to a cup of wine. Try the remedy, Dick, and get rid of your gloom. You look like a death's head at a festival. What if you have stumbled on an ill-omened grave! What if you have been banned by a witch! What if you have stood face to face with the devil—or a ghost! Heed them not! Drink, and set care at defiance. And not to gainsay my own counsel, I shall fill my cup again. For, in good sooth! this is rare clary, Dick; and talking of wine, you should taste some of the wonderful Rhenish found in the abbot's cellar by our ancestor, Richard Assheton—a century old, if it be a day, and yet cordial and corroborative as ever. Those monks were lusty tipplers, Dick. I sometimes wish I had been an abbot myself. I should have made a rare father confessor, especially to a pretty penitent. Here, Gregory, hie thee to the master cellarer, and bid him fill me a goblet of the old Rhenish—the wine from the abbot's cellar. Thou understandest—or, stay, better bring the flask. I have a profound respect for the venerable bottle, and would pay my devoirs to it. Hie away, good fellow."

"You will drink too much if you go on thus," remarked Richard.

"Not a drop," rejoined Nicholas. "I am blithe as a lark, and would keep so. That is why I drink. But to return to our ghosts. Since this place must be haunted, I would it were visited by spirits of a livelier kind than old Paslew. There is Isole de Heton, for instance. The fair votaress would be the sort of ghost for me. I would not turn my back on her, but face her manfully. Look at her picture, Dick. Was ever countenance sweeter than hers—lips more tempting, or eyes more melting? Is she not adorable? Zounds!" he exclaimed, suddenly pausing, and staring at the portrait—"would you believe it, Dick? The fair Isole winked at me—I'll swear she did. I mean, I will venture to affirm upon oath, if required, that she winked."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Richard. "The fumes of the wine have mounted to your brain, and disordered it."

"No such thing," cried Nicholas, regarding the picture as steadily

as he could; "she's leering at me now. By the Queen of Paphos! another wink. Nay, if you doubt me, watch her well yourself. A pleasant adventure this—ha, ha!"

"A truce to this drunken foolery," cried Richard, moving away.

"Drunken! 'Sdeath! recal that epithet, Dick," cried Nicholas, angrily. "I am no more drunk than yourself, you dog. I can walk as steadily, and see as plainly as you; and I will maintain it at the point of the sword, that the eyes of that picture have lovingly regarded me; nay, that they follow me now."

"A common delusion with a portrait," said Richard; "they appear to follow *me*."

"But they do not wink at you as they do at me," said Nicholas; "neither do the lips break into smiles, and display the pearly teeth beneath them, as occurs in my case. Grim old abbots frown on you, but fair, though frail, votaresses smile on me. I am the favoured mortal, Dick."

"Were it as you represent, Nicholas," replied Richard, gravely, "I should say, indeed, that some evil principle was at work to lure you, through your passions, to perdition. But I know they are all fancies engendered by your heated brain, which, in your calmer moments, you will discard, as I discard them now. If I have any weight with you, I counsel you to drink no more, or you will commit some mad foolery, of which you will be ashamed hereafter. The discreeter course would be, to retire altogether, and for this you have ample excuse, as you will have to arise betimes to-morrow to set out for Pendle Forest with Master Potts."

"Retire!" exclaimed Nicholas, bursting into a loud contemptuous laugh. "I like thy counsel, lad. Yes, I will retire when I have finished the old monastic Rhenish which Gregory is bringing me. I will retire when I have danced the Morisco with the May Queen—the Cushion Dance with Dame Tetlow—and the brawl with the lovely Isole de Heton. Another wink, Dick. By our Lady! she assents to my proposition. When I have done all this, and somewhat more, it will be time to think of retiring. But I have the night before me, Dick—not to be spent in drowsy unconsciousness as thou recommendest, but in active, pleasurable enjoyment. No man requires less sleep than I do. Ordinarily, I 'retire,' as thou termest it, at ten, and rise with the sun. In summer I am abroad soon after three, and mend that if thou canst, Dick. To-night I shall seek my couch about midnight, and yet I'll warrant me I shall be the first stirring in the abbey, and in any case I shall be in the saddle before thee."

"It may be," replied Richard, "but it was to preserve you from extravagance to-night that I volunteered advice, which from my knowledge of your character I might as well have withheld. But let me caution you on another point. Dance with Dame Tetlow or any other dame you please—dance with the fair Isole de Heton, if you can prevail upon her to descend from her frame and give you her hand; but I object—most decidedly object—to your dancing with Alizon Device."

"Why so?" cried Nicholas—"why should I not dance with whom I please? And what right hast thou to forbid me Alizon? Troth, lad, art thou so ignorant of human nature as not to know that forbidden fruit is the sweetest? It hath ever been so since the fall. I am now only the

more bent upon dancing with the prohibited damsel. But I would fain know the principle on which thou erectest thyself into her guardian. Is it because she fainted when thy sword was crossed with that hot-headed fool, Sir Thomas Metcalfe, that thou flatterest thyself she is in love with thee? Be not too sure of it, Dick. Many a timid wench has swooned at the sight of a naked weapon, without being enamoured of the swordsman. The fainting proves nothing. But grant she loves thee—what then? An end must speedily come of it, so better finish at once, before she be entangled in a mesh from which she cannot be extricated without danger. For hark thee, Dick, whatever thou mayst think, I am not so far gone that I know not what I say, neither is my vision so much obscured that I see not some matters plainly enough, and I understand thee and Alizon well, and see through ye both. This matter must go no further. It has gone too far already. After to-night you must see her no more. I am serious in this—serious *inter pocula*, if such a thing can be. It is necessary to observe caution, for reasons that will at once occur to thee. Thou canst not wed this girl—then why trifle with her till her heart be broken."

"Broken it shall never be by me!" cried Richard.

"But I tell you it will be broken, if you do not desist at once," rejoined Nicholas. "I was but jesting when I said I would rob you of her in the Morisco, though it would be charity to both, and spare you many a pang hereafter were I to put my threat into execution. However, I I have a soft heart where aught of love is concerned, and having pointed out the risk you will incur, I shall leave you to follow your own devices. But, for Alizon's sake, stop in time."

"You now speak soberly and sensibly enough, Nicholas," replied Richard; "and I thank you heartily for your counsel, and if I do not follow it by withdrawing at once from a pursuit which may appear to you hopeless, if not dangerous, you will, I hope, give me credit for being actuated by worthy motives. I will at once, and frankly, admit that I love Alizon, and loving her, you may rest assured I would sacrifice my life a thousand times rather than endanger her happiness. But there is a point in her history with which, if you were acquainted, it might alter your view of the case; but this is not the season for its disclosure, neither, I am bound to say, does the circumstance so materially alter the apparent posture of affairs as to remove all difficulty. On the contrary, it leaves an insurmountable obstacle behind it."

"Are you wise, then, in going on?" asked Nicholas.

"I know not," answered Richard, "but I feel as if I were the sport of fate. Uncertain whither to turn for the best, I leave the disposition of my course to chance. But alas!" he added, sadly, "all seems to point out that this meeting with Alizon will be my last."

"Well, cheer up, lad," said Nicholas. "These afflictions are hard to bear, it is true; but somehow they are got over. Just as if your horse should fling you in the midst of a hedge when you are making a flying leap, you get scratched and bruised, but you scramble out, and in a day or two are on your legs again. Love breaks no bones, that's one comfort. When at your age I was desperately in love—not with Mistress Nicholas Assheton, Heaven help the fond soul! but with—never mind with whom—but it was not a very prudent match, and so, in my

worldly wisdom, I was obliged to cry off. A sad business it was. I thought I should have died of it, and I made quite sure that the devoted girl would die first, in which case we were to occupy the same grave. But I was not driven to such a dire extremity, for, before I had kept house a week, Jack Walker, the keeper of Downham, made his appearance in my room, and after telling me of the mischief done by a pair of otters in the Ribble, finding me in a very desponding state, ventured to inquire if I had heard the news. Expecting to hear of the death of the girl, I prepared myself for an outburst of grief, and resolved to give immediate directions for a double funeral, when he informed me—what do you think, Dick?—that she was going to be married to himself. I recovered at once, and immediately went out to hunt the otters, and rare sport we had. But here comes Gregory with the famous old Rhenish. Better take a cup, Dick. This is the best cure for the heartache, and for all other aches and grievances. Ah! glorious stuff—miraculous wine," he added, smacking his lips with extraordinary satisfaction, after a deep draught; "those worthy fathers were excellent judges. I have a great reverence for them. But where can Alizon be all this while? Supper is well-nigh over, and the dancing and pastimes will commence anon, and yet she comes not."

"She is here," cried Richard.

And as he spoke Mistress Nutter and Alizon entered the hall.

Richard endeavoured to read in the young girl's countenance some intimation of what had passed between her and Mistress Nutter, but he only remarked that she was paler than before, and had traces of anxiety about her. Mistress Nutter also looked gloomy and thoughtful, and there was nothing in the manner or deportment of either to lead to the conclusion that a discovery of relationship between them had taken place. As Alizon moved on, her eyes met those of Richard; but the look was intercepted by Mistress Nutter, who instantly called off her daughter's attention to herself; and while the young man hesitated to join them, his sister came quickly up to him, and drew him away in another direction. Left to himself, Nicholas tossed off another cup of the miraculous Rhenish, which improved in flavour as he discussed it, and then placing a chair opposite the portrait of Isole de Heton, filled a bumper, and uttering the name of the fair votaress, drained it to her. This time he was quite certain he received a significant glance in return, and no one being near to contradict him, he went on indulging the idea of an amorous understanding between himself and the picture, till he had finished the bottle, and obtained as many ogles as he swallowed draughts of wine, upon which he arose and staggered off in search of Dame Tetlow.

THE FORCE OF HABIT.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

THAT vague, undefinable, ever-courted, ever-pursued will-o'-the-wisp kind of thing, which some men call Fortune, and others Chance, has from the time of the Cæsars, even to the present day, generally been allowed to be capricious. With what truth and justice she has been charged with a certain obliquity of vision, and a peculiar and undiscriminating way in dealing out her favours to the sons of men, it is beside our purpose to determine. There are certainly grave charges against her, but I believe there is no man on whom she has bestowed any mark of her kindness who has not evinced the most lively respect for her judgment. This fact is naturally suggestive of the following question :—Are not the carpers the disappointed and unsuccessful wooers?

I am not aware that the village of Rumbledike, in Yorkshire, was ever famous for any particular characteristic. Antiquarians have never instituted any learned inquiries in its vicinity, and the picturesqueness of its scenery has seldom invited travellers or valetudinarians to pay it a visit. It is, nevertheless, the scene of the present narrative, and the birthplace of its hero.

"Ben, Ben," cried one morning the bluff, jolly, red-faced landlord of the Pigeon and Snipe, as he issued in his shirt-sleeves, and with a short white apron fastened to the front of his person, from the most frequented hostelry in the place.

"Here I am, guv'nor," replied a man with a pitchfork in his hand, emerging from an adjoining stable. This was Poppinjay, the ostler. He was dressed in a pair of soiled fustian trousers, faded black cotton velvet waistcoat, with glass buttons and calico sleeves, which precluded the necessity of his wearing a coat—a piece of economy much practised by the class to which he belonged. His head was covered with a rough hairy cap, of a circular form, and without any peak.

"Here's a letter for you," said the landlord.

"A what?"

"A letter."

"I niver hard o' syke o' thing. A letter for Ben Poppinjay! Ho, ho, ho! We'll be boon to hae thunner and leeghtning, or summat varry wonderful, I'se getting so mighty consequential. Dash my buttons, I doant think I can read it, efter all. Just break t' seal, maister, and tell us whats't aboot, will 'ee?"

The letter was accordingly opened, and these were its contents:

"London, Chancery-lane.

"SIR,—We are instructed by our correspondents, Messrs. Reynard and Ferrit, of Jamaica, West Indies, to inform you that the death of your uncle, Mr. Michael Poppinjay, took place in that island on the 3rd of October last, and that by his will you are appointed sole heir to the whole of his estate. We shall be glad if you will come up to town as early as possible, to arrange with us as to the disposal of his property and the winding up of his affairs.

"We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

"SPIDER, WEB, AND SPIDER.

"B. Poppinjay, Esq., Rumbledike."

"There, Ben—there—there's a letter worth the postage, eh?" shouted the excited landlord.

"If it beant ower much trouble, maister, I'd loike to hae it read ower again. I doant exzackly understand it, you see."

"Ay, to be sure—to be sure. I'll read it over again."

"It's a rum joke that, maister," said Ben, scratching his head, after the letter had been read a second time.

"I think it's a very lucky one."

"Ay, ay, it's not amiss. But dang it I shall niver knaw whot to mak o' t' money."

"You'll find plenty o' use for it, there's no fear o' that."

"But what's to be done wi' these 'torny chaps? I'se not used wi' transacting bisness wi' syke as them, and I'd rayther not go to Lunnon about it."

"I'll go myself, Ben. I'll put things right for you, for, mayhap, I've had a little more experience in these consarns than you."

"That'll be the varry thing, zur; you can manage it better than me, no doot."

The matter was accordingly so arranged, and Mr. Poppinjay's patron, after as little delay as possible, was on his road to London.

About half a mile from the village of Rumbledike, upon a slight elevation, and surrounded by pleasant grounds, stands a large house, the property of Meredith Walkeringham, Esq.; it is called "Starch Hall." Walkeringham, by the way, accumulated his money by manufacturing starch—hence "Starch Hall." There is an air of exactness and uniformity about the place that appears odd and remarkable to a casual observer. There does not appear to be a pebble on the carriage-drive out of its place, nor a blade of grass on the lawn the hundredth part of an inch longer than it should be. Every hedge seems to have been cut by a mathematician, and every tree, you would suppose, had been restricted to a certain development. The house is of a quadrangular form, but there are no wings—no projections to destroy the harmony of the building. The entrance is in the centre, and has an equal number of windows on each side. The window-blinds are drawn down every morning to exactly the same extent, and when one is drawn up, the others are drawn up likewise. The gardens behind the house present the same regularity—the beds and walks look as if they had been laid out with a compass and measured off with a three-feet rule. Everything seems to say, "Stiff—stiff—very formal;" and the dog in the yard, you would imagine, only barks on stated occasions.

The news of Mr. Poppinjay's good fortune spread rapidly through the village, and amongst those that called upon him at his residence to congratulate him, was Meredith Walkeringham, Esq., of "Starch Hall."

"Mr. Poppinjay," said Mr. Walkeringham, "allow me to express the unbounded pleasure which Mrs. Walkeringham and myself have experienced at the news of your accession to fortune by the death of your much-lamented uncle in Jamaica—one of the West India islands."

"Thank'ee, zur—thank'ee."

"I trust," pursued Mr. Walkeringham, "that this large fortune—this vast amount of wealth—will determine you to move in that sphere to which it will necessarily give you access, and cause you to forsake that society to which you have hitherto been accustomed."

"We'll see aboot that, squire; we'll see aboot that."

"Remember, Poppinjay, I speak to you as a friend and as a counsellor."

"Sartinly, zur—sartinly."

"Have you resolved how you shall dispose of this wealth?"

"Not yet."

"The safest place in which you can invest it is the British funds. They afford you a moderate interest and good security; and our constitution being happily founded on a firm basis, they are not liable to any serious fluctuations."

"I'll think aboot it, Mr. Walkeringham."

"Reflect seriously upon the advice I have given you, Poppinjay; for the present, farewell."

In a short time the affairs of the deceased Mr. Poppinjay were wound up, and when all expenses against the estate had been paid, there remained a sum of between five and six thousand pounds. A very large portion of this money was lodged in the funds, and the interest thereof yielded Mr. Poppinjay a very pretty income. Of course he looked upon it as an enormous revenue, but the world will not think him a modern Crœsus for all that. This sudden transition worked, you may be sure, a considerable change in him. His new position, nevertheless, had disadvantages, and many of them annoyed him sorely. When it was suggested to him that he should wear clothes befitting his new station in life, he was not a little angry, I warrant you; and it was only by the earnest solicitation of Mr. Walkeringham that he could be prevailed upon to relinquish his long brown coat, striped waistcoat, &c., and don a suit of spick and span black clothes, made according to the most approved fashion. He certainly found himself very uncomfortable the first time he put them on. He was always diving into the wrong places for the pockets, and searching for buttons where there were none.

The high standing of Mr. Walkeringham prevented that gentleman from associating with any of the inhabitants of Rumbledike, there being no family in the village to whom he considered he would be justified in extending the hand of friendship, or of admitting, on terms of equality, within the walls of his mansion. He had laid it down as an axiom, that consistency of conduct should, in all the relations of life, be strictly regarded. Nothing could have appeared to him more irregular—more out of order, than for a person of affluence to hold communication with one in a humbler walk of life.

The sudden influx of wealth upon Mr. Poppinjay induced Mr. Walkeringham to court the friendship of that gentleman. About this time he had visitors at "Starch Hall," and he deemed the present to be a favourable opportunity to invite Poppinjay to spend a day with him there. Besides, the wealth of Poppinjay would add to his own importance, and if that individual kept his own counsel, he would no doubt be taken for a plain country gentleman.

It will be unnecessary to inform the reader that honest Poppinjay, whatever other qualifications he might possess, was not very well adapted for what is called genteel society. The etiquette of the stable was not exactly similar to that of the drawing-room; and the company that he was in the habit of meeting at the "Pigeon and Snipe" rather differed from that he was introduced to at "Starch Hall."

Mrs. Walkeringham, in her manner, was like her husband—stiff and punctilious. The visitors who were partaking of the hospitality of "Starch Hall" were a Mr. and Mrs. Bumpshot. Bumpshot was a tall, meagre-looking man, with a bald head. He was a great naturalist and conchologist. He would spend weeks in exploring the sea-shore at ——, and if he found a shell of a peculiar conformation, he was so credulous that he would instantly cheat himself into the belief that he had made a discovery, and would write to a hundred societies and conchologists upon the subject, and explain to them wherein the shell he had found differed from all other shells he had either seen or heard of. On the day of Poppinjay's visit he and Mr. Walkeringham had gone out to explore some of the neighbouring places, whilst the former gentleman had been left behind as a companion for the ladies.

"Upon my word, Mr. Walkeringham," said Mrs. Walkeringham, on the return of the exploring party, "I don't think your appearance is improved by your walk."

"I declare they have been wading through the mud purposely," Mrs. Bumpshot observed.

"Ah! our boots are certainly not very clean," said Bumpshot; "we had better put them off, Walkeringham, and allow them to be cleaned."

"I think it would be well to allow them to go through the process of cleansing," replied Walkeringham.

"Dang it, give 'em to me!" exclaimed Mr. Poppinjay, springing from his seat; "I'll soon polish 'em up for you, and mak 'em bright eneaf to see yoursels in 'em."

"Mr. Poppinjay," said Bumpshot, in the greatest surprise—for he was not acquainted with that person's history,—"we could not think of such a thing—not for a moment; could we, Mr. Walkeringham?"

"Indisputably not," was the reply.

"Mr. Poppinjay," said Mr. Walkeringham, after a pause, "you are perfectly oblivious of your present condition in society. I beg that you will reflect before you make such a proposition as that again, and remember that you are my friend and guest—not my servant."

"I forgot that, zur."

We will not enumerate the mistakes that Mr. Poppinjay committed during dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Walkeringham were excessively annoyed by his blunders, and had some difficulty to restrain their anger. After dinner, it was proposed that the whole of the party, with the exception of Mr. Bumpshot (he being anxious to search in a hedge in the vicinity for some particular specimen of the snail), should drive a few miles into the country. This proposal emanated from Mr. Walkeringham; for, besides the pleasure of the drive, he was desirous of parading his equipage.

"Poppinjay," said Mr. Walkeringham, "probably you will have the goodness to give instructions to John to get the carriage ready?"

"Ay, sure."

"A very honest man that," observed Mr. Walkeringham, as soon as Poppinjay had left the room. "A very praiseworthy character indeed, sir."

"I have no doubt of it," said Bumpshot.

"Is he in any business?" inquired Mrs. Bumpshot.

"Oh! dear no," replied Mrs. Walkeringham. "He is an independent person—a plain country gentleman."

Some further conversation ensued, and afterwards Walkeringham and Bumpshot left the room, and proceeded to the coach-house to see if the carriage were ready. When they arrived there, both gentlemen were overwhelmed with astonishment to discover Poppinjay, with his coat off and a mop in his hand, that he was applying to one of the wheels of the vehicle, which, being elevated upon a trestle, revolved at an indescribable speed, spirting in its revolutions a quantity of water upon Poppinjay and every surrounding object. John was engaged in carrying water for the purpose described.

"That's reeght, my lad," said Poppinjay; "bring some mair watter—there's nothing loike a good cleaning—it'll do it a soight o' good. Dang it, I doant think it's had syke a cleaning sin it wor belt."

"Hollo, Mr. Poppinjay!" exclaimed Mr. Walkeringham, very angry to find his guest so employed; "why, you are performing the duty of a drudge, sir—a common menial."

"I thought I would help t' lad a bit," said Poppinjay. "You see, zur," he continued, turning to Bumpshot, "it's a soort o' bisness I've sarved my time to, and I can't leave it off."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Bumpshot, very desirous of knowing what Poppinjay had really been.

"Well, make haste," said Walkeringham, anxious to prevent any further disclosures.

Not many minutes elapsed before everything was in readiness; and Mrs. Walkeringham and Mrs. Bumpshot being already dressed, they were conducted to the carriage by Mr. Walkeringham, who sat behind with them, whilst Poppinjay got upon the box beside John.

The most frequented road was taken, Mr. Walkeringham preferring a conspicuous thoroughfare to one of obscurity. His object obviously was that his equipage should be seen, and that its appearance should convey to the minds of spectators an adequate notion of his wealth and importance. His ambition might have been fully gratified, but for an occasional *contretemps*, which materially tended to lessen his dignity. Mr. Poppinjay having acquaintances in all directions, met a number of these during their drive, who were engaged in the humble task of driving coal-waggons, drays, &c., and to whom he bowed and waved his hand with the utmost cordiality. These little incidents detracted greatly from the consequence that Mr. Walkeringham was desirous of assuming, and showed him in a light savouring a little, it must be confessed, of the ridiculous.

On the return of the party, a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Walkeringham was held; and it was determined to relinquish the society of Mr. Poppinjay in future, as his former habits did not render him a very eligible member of their circle of acquaintance. Neither party, it may safely be stated, sustained any loss by this determination.

Poppinjay, although a rich man, was in reality less happy than before. He had no employment suited to his mind, and time hung heavily on his hands. One day he was standing in the village, looking at a party of haymakers, when a gentleman on horseback rode past him, and presently alighted. Poppinjay mechanically ran up to him, touched his hat, and desired to know if he might hold his horse. The gentleman was naturally surprised to see a person of Poppinjay's respectable appearance

desirous of so humble an occupation, but supposing he was really in indigent circumstances, consented.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Poppinjay, when presence of mind recurred to him. "I dpant know what made me tak this job in hand. I want none on his brass. I'se p'r'aps as weel off as he is."

Poppinjay earned sixpence by the job, and took it forthwith to a poor woman of his acquaintance.

He became in time so tired of idleness that he returned to the service of his *ci-devant* governor—the jolly landlord of the Pigeon and Snipe—but accepting of no remuneration for his labour.

Dear reader! if you should ever pass through Rumbledike, pay a visit to the Pigeon and Snipe. The entertainment is good, and I have no doubt you will hear this identical story from the lips of Ben Poppinjay himself. He is still living—still there—still as honest, frank, and straightforward as ever he was in his life.

SORCERY AND MAGIC.*

Mr. Wright has taken a clear and sound view of his subject. The belief in sorcery, he says, was founded on the equally extensive creed, that, besides our own visible existence, we live in an invisible world of spiritual beings, by which our actions, and even our thoughts, are often guided, and which have a certain degree of power over the elements, and over the ordinary course of organic life. This is the doctrine propounded by Mrs. Crowe, and which we have also advocated on several occasions.

But the mysterious manifestations of such spirituality, to which vulgarity and coarseness were imparted by ignorance and superstition, were made, more especially in the darkness of the middle ages, powerful instruments of political intrigue, the means of gratifying private revenge, and the groundwork for the most abominable acts of extortion. "The deficiency of civilisation in the middle ages," Mr. Mackinnon justly remarks, "is never more evident than in the conduct pursued towards unhappy persons accused of sorcery and witchcraft during that period."

Mr. Wright has, in a prefatory letter to Lord Londesborough, at once clearly exposed, and vigorously denounced and stigmatised, the true origin of these disgraceful inhuman persecutions:

> It appears to me that these are features on which sometimes at least we ought to dwell, and which it has been too much the fashion with historical writers to conceal from view, and I am not sure if we are not at this moment suffering from the results of that concealment. It is true that if, in tracing the history of declining Rome, we pass gently over the crimes of a Caligula or a Commodus, if we show the bright side of the history of the middle ages and hide their viciousness and brutality, if we tell the story of Romanism without its arrogance, its persecutions, and its massacres, or if we attempt to trace the progress of society from

* Narratives of Sorcery and Magic, from the most Authentic Sources. By Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., &c. 2 vols. Richard Bentley.

darkness to light without entering into the details of those strange hallucinations which have at times disfigured and impeded it—such as are related in the following narratives—in acting thus we spare the reader much that is horrible and revolting to his better feelings, but at the same time we destroy the moral and utility of history itself.

If I mistake not, the history presented in these volumes furnishes more than any other an example of the manner in which the public mind may, under particular circumstances, be acted upon by erroneous views. The paganism of our forefathers, instead of being eradicated by papal Rome, was preserved as a useful instrument of power, and fostered until it grew into a monster far more fearful and degrading than the original from which it sprung, and infinitely more cruel in its influence. It is the object of the following detached histories to exhibit the character and forms under which at various different periods the superstitions of sorcery and magic affected the progress, or interfered with the peace of society. At first they appeared as the mere, almost unobserved, fables of the vulgar—then they were seized upon as an arm of the ecclesiastical power, to crush those who dared to question the spiritual doctrines or oppose the temporal power of the papal church. From this time sorcery makes its appearance more frequently in history, until it gained that hold on the minds of all classes which led to the fearful persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It will, indeed, be found, on looking into the narratives of the more remarkable of these dark episodes in history, that in almost all a priest is more or less concerned. Passing over the affair of Lady Alice Kyteler, which is a simple case of extortion on the part of a turbulent, intriguing prelate, Richard de Ledrede, at that time Bishop of Ossory, the more familiar instances of the persecution of the Publicans, the Waldenses, the Templars, and the Stedingers, best illustrate our author's assertions. The Publicans, or Paulicians, were branded as sorcerers, and persecuted as such, like the Waldenses, simply because they attempted to throw off the corruptions of papacy:

Walter Mapes, a well-known English writer of the latter half of the twelfth century, in a treatise entitled "De Nugis Curialium," recently published for the first time by the author of these pages, has preserved some curious stories relating to these Publicans, whom he represents as being under the necessity of concealing their opinions from the knowledge of the public. Some of them, he says, who had returned to the community of the church, confessed that at their meetings, which were held "about the first watch of the night," they closed the doors and windows, and sat waiting in silence, until at length a black cat descended amongst them. They then immediately put out the lights, and approaching this strange object of adoration, every one caught hold of it how he could and kissed it. The worshippers then took hold of each other, men and women, and proceeded to acts which cannot here be described. The Archbishop of Rheims told Mapes himself that there was a certain great baron in the district of Vienne who always carried with him in his scrip a small quantity of exorcised salt, as a defence against the sorcery of these people, to which he thought he was exposed even at table. Information was brought to him at last that his nephew, who was also a man of great wealth and influence (perhaps the same Eudo de Stella mentioned by William of Newbury), had been converted to the creed of these Publicans or Paterins by the intermediation of two knights, and he immediately paid him a visit. As they all sat at dinner, the noble convert ordered to be placed before his uncle a fine barbel on a dish, which was equally tempting by its look and smell, but he had no sooner sprinkled a little of his salt upon it, than it vanished, and nothing was left on the dish but a bit of dirt. The uncle, astonished at what happened, urged his nephew to abandon his evil courses, but in vain, and he left him, carrying away as prisoners the two knights who had corrupted him. To punish these for their heresy, he bound them in a little hut of inflammable materials, to which he set fire in order to burn them, but when the ashes were cleared away, they were found totally unhurt. To counteract the effects this false miracle might produce on the minds of the vulgar, the baron now erected a larger hut with still more inflammable materials, which he sprinkled all over with holy water as a precaution against sorcery, but now it was found that the flames would not com-

municate themselves to the building. When people entered, however, they found to their astonishment that the former miracle was reversed; for now, while the wooden building which had been sprinkled with holy water would not burn, the two sorcerers were found reduced to ashes.

The Stedingers, inhabitants, according to Mr. Wright, of the district of Steding, the modern Oldenberg, but in reality Frieslanders, who had formed themselves into a republic throughout the district that extended from the Weser to the Zuydersee, were nearly exterminated by Gerard, Archbishop of Bremen, in 1234, for their sturdy love of moral and religious independence. The Archbishop of Bremen with the Stedingers, like Clement V. and Philippe le Bel with the Knights Templars, began by defaming the cause which they wished to destroy. The king was incited by poverty and avarice, the prelates by cupidity and the love of temporal authority. There is a curious point in the history of the Templars, that the ceremonies of initiation, as attested by a very great number of knights, were attended with acts which were apparently derogatory to the piety of the order:

M. Michelet (Mr. Wright tells us), who has carefully investigated the materials relating to the trial of the Templars, has suggested at least an ingenious explanation of these anomalies. He imagines that the form of reception was borrowed from the figurative mysteries and rites of the early church. The candidate for admission into the order, according to this notion, was first presented as a sinner and renegade, in which character, after the example of St. Peter, he denied Christ. This denial was a sort of pantomime, in which the novice expressed his reprobate state by spitting on the cross. The candidate was then stripped of his profane clothing, received through the kiss of the order into a higher state of faith, and re-dressed with the garb of its holiness. Forms like these would, in the middle ages, be easily misunderstood, and their original meaning soon forgotten.

We do not mean to say that there were not really bad characters among these heretical sorcerers, as in the case of Eudo de Stella and his outlaws, whose crimes were treated with so much severity by the church; or that occasionally the tables were not turned, as when Philippe le Bel was reduced to the alternative of accusing Pope Boniface VIII. of heresy and sorcery to check the power and insolence of the church, and the ambitious pretensions of the See of Rome in his own dominions. But still the great majority of such charges and persecutions originated with the church, sorcery being by it conceived to be one of the means used by Satan to stir up heresies, or for worse purposes, as we see in the instance of the before-mentioned persecution of the Stedingers and of the Knights Templars, and of which an equally glaring instance is given in the proceedings of Pierre le Broussart, inquisitor of the faith in the city of Arras, in 1459-60.

Mr. Mackinnon attributes, in his "History of Civilisation," after Dr. Hutchinson, the first impulse given to this species of fanaticism in modern times to the bull of Pope Innocent VIII., by whom it was issued, in 1484, to the inquisitors of Almain, exhorting them to discover, and empowering them to destroy, all such as were guilty of witchcraft; but Mr. Wright justly refers further back, to the first bull against sorcery (*Contra magos magicasque superstitiones*) issued by Pope John XXII., in 1318, and which was the groundwork of the inquisitorial persecutions of the following ages.

Attempts, it is well known, were made by the See of Rome to introduce the Inquisition into Great Britain under Mary. Bonner's commis-

sion of twenty, whose "burnings," according to Bishop Burnet, "were carried on vigorously in some few places, but coolly in most parts, for the *dislike* of them grew to be almost universal," was a modified form of this most iniquitous tribunal; and we very much doubt if there are not many in this country who still entertain a wholesome dread of being suspected of heresy, sorcery, or magic; or in any way abetting, protecting, or favouring those who are suspected of the said bad practices.

To turn, however, from the darker pages in the history of priestcraft and ecclesiastical dominion, there is something refreshing, nay, almost heroic—as compared with the idea of an ignorant instrument in the hands of demons—in the idea of man-master of demons by the powerful intermediation of a science which was only within the reach of a few. The magician differed from the sorcerer, inasmuch as he was the master and not the slave of the spirits who were supposed to work his will. In the earlier ages this mysterious science flourished widely, and there were noted schools of magic in several parts of Europe. It is not a little characteristic that the most famous of these schools was that of Toledo in Spain, nearly on the confines which divided Christendom from Islam,—on that spiritual neutral ground where the demon might then bid defiance to the Gospel and the Koran alike:

> One of the most famous was that of Toledo in Spain, nearly on the confines which divided Christendom from Islam, on that spiritual neutral ground where the demon might then bid defiance to the Gospel or the Koran. It was in this school that Gerbert, in the tenth century, is said to have obtained his marvellous proficiency in knowledge forbidden by the church. Gerbert lived at Toledo, in the house of a celebrated Arabian philosopher, whose book of magic, or "grimoire," had unusual power in coercing the evil one. Gerbert was seized with an ardent desire of possessing this book, but the Saracen would not part with it for love or money, and lest it might be stolen from him, he concealed it under his pillow at night. The Saracen had a beautiful daughter; and Gerbert, as the last resource, gave his love to the maiden, and in a moment of amorous confidence learnt from her the place where the book was concealed. He made the philosopher drunk, stole the grimoire, and took to flight. The magician followed him, and was enabled, by consulting the stars, to know where he was, either on earth or water. But Gerbert at last baffled him, by hanging under a bridge in such a manner that he touched neither one element nor the other, and finally arrived in safety on the sea-shore. Here he opened his book, and by its powerful enchantment called up the arch-fiend himself, who at his orders carried him in safety to the opposite coast.

Generally speaking, we are left to form our notion of the practice of sorcery and magic in the middle ages from individual and scattered examples of superstitious practices. But Mr. Wright points out that it was also a peculiar trait in the middle ages to create imaginary persons, and clothe them with the attributes of a class; as also (he might have added) to endow real persons with the same attributes, and thus make them the types, as it were, of popular attachment and glory.

Mr. Wright gives the history of Virgil the enchanter as a type of the earlier medieval sorcerer, and of Friar Bacon and Dr. Faustus as types of the later medieval magicians. Among the celebrated English magicians we have also Dr. Dee and his followers. Virgil was a creation, but Roger Bacon was a learned scholar and a man of science; and the very narrative of his exploits betray their origin. Faust was also a clever man—a native of Kundling, in Wirtemberg—more given to mystery than even Friar Bacon; or, as Mr. Wright has it, "the character of Dr. Faustus seems, as a magician, to be more veritable than that of Friar

Bacon." As an example of the later medieval magic, we may give the exploit for which Bacon was most famous, and which he accomplished with the assistance of Friar Bungay:

> He had a fancy that he would defend England against its enemies by walling it with brass, preparatory to which they made a head of that metal. Their intent was to make the head speak, for which purpose they raised a spirit in a wood, by whose directions they made a fumigation, to which the head was to be exposed during a month, and to be carefully watched, because if the two friars did not hear it before it had given over speaking, their labour would be lost. Accordingly, the care of watching over the head while they slept was entrusted to Bacon's man Miles. The period of speaking unfortunately came while Miles was watching. The head suddenly uttered the two words, "Time is." Miles thought it was unnecessary to disturb his master for such a brief speech, and sat still. In half an hour, the head again broke silence with the words, "Time was." Still Miles waited, until, in another half hour, the head said, "Time is past," and fell to the ground with a terrible noise. Thus, through the negligence of Miles, the labour of the two friars was thrown away.

Some of Friar Bacon's exploits partake, as far as magic is concerned, a great deal of the "magic"-lantern character. Bacon, it is well known, devoted himself much to practical science; and his chemical discoveries, as in the case of gunpowder, his optical glasses, and his mechanical contrivances, were the wonder of the thirteenth century. The discovery of the magic-lantern—to the effects of which must be undoubtedly referred the exploits narrated by Mr. Wright as having been performed at court—is generally attributed to the same learned personage, in 1252. Sir David Brewster has done a great deal in his little work on "Natural Magic" towards illustrating what have been called the higher schools of magic; that is to say, the proficiency of really eminent and intelligent scholars, as Bacon, Faust, and Dr. Dee, and others of the same stamp, who used the superstitions of the age in which they lived, and abused their acquisitions in art and science by cloaking them with mystery for the purposes of higher distinction. Still it is certainly far from improbable that the initiated in these higher schools of magic were in possession of a certain amount and kind of knowledge, which was not only far in advance of the contemporary vulgar learning, but, very possibly, also in advance of, or differing from, the knowledge that we possess even at present. We see this in the case of poisons; and as it was in that which was baneful, and the secret of which is now gone by, so it may be that some useful facts have also been lost with the long-exploded forms and ceremonies of the magical art.

Mr. Wright's object has, however, been to develop the mental and literary history of witchcraft and magic, rather than its philosophy; and, in some respects, this makes his work more readable and more satisfactory, from the clear and instructive narrative that it presents, than had he attempted too much at once. How truly are the inevitable results of persecution exhibited in the establishment of the Inquisition as a moral and physical antagonist to witchcraft! With the practice of drawing the crime of sorcery under its jurisdiction, the belief in its effects became only the more intense, and spread the more widely. Add to this, that in the fifteenth century the same Holy Inquisition had gradually formed the witchcraft legends into a regular system; and, when published under such authority, few would venture to disbelieve it. At the same time, Mr. Wright does not neglect to point out how many of the circumstances

of the earlier belief relating to witchcraft may be traced back to the mythology of the anti-Christian period:

The grand night of meeting of the German witches was the night of St. Walpurgis, which answered to one of the great religious festivals of the Teutonic tribes before their conversion. In after-times, two other nights of annual assembly were added, those of the feasts of St. John and St. Bartholomew. It is probable, that as Christianity gained ground, and became established as the religion of the state, the old religious festivals, to which the lower and more ignorant part of the people, and particularly the weaker sex (more susceptible of superstitious feelings), were still attached, were celebrated in solitary places and in private, and those who frequented them were branded as witches and sorcerers, who met together to hold communication with demons, for as such the earlier Christians looked upon all the heathen gods. This gives us an easy explanation of the manner in which the heathen worship became transformed into the witchcraft of the middle ages. At an early period it was commonly believed that the witches (*unholde*) rode through the air to the place of rendezvous on reeds and sticks, or on besoms, which latter were the articles readiest at hand to women of this class of society. The chief place of meeting, at the great annual witch-festivals in Germany, appears to have been, from an early period, the Brocken mountain, the highest part of the wild Hartz chain; but there were several other favourite places of resort. The persons believed to have been initiated at their assemblies were looked upon with dread, for they were supposed to be capable of injuring people in various ways, both in their persons and in their possessions, and their malice was especially directed against little children. One of the earliest trials for witchcraft, unconnected with other offences, on the continent, is that of a woman in the bishopric of Novara, on the northern borders of Italy, about the middle of the fourteenth century: and it illustrates the general belief in Germany at that period. It appears, from the slight account which remains of this trial (which is printed in a collection of criminal cases in Latin, by Joh. Bapt. Ziletti, fol. Franck. 1578), that the belief then held by the church was, that women of this class could, by their touch or look, fascinate men, or children, or beasts, so as to produce sickness and death; and they believed further, that they had devoted their own souls to the demon, to whom also they had done personal homage, after having trampled under foot the figure of the cross. For these offences they were judged by the most learned theologians to be worthy of being burnt at the stake.

In the earlier period of the history of witchcraft in Germany, we find no traces of the more repulsive details of the Sabbath of the sorcerers; and it is, therefore, probable that they were introduced there perhaps not before the fourteenth century, and that even during that century they did not constitute an article of the general belief. They appear to have originated in France and Italy, where there is reason for believing, that down to a late period some of the worst sects of the ancient Gnostics retained a footing. These sects appear to have been justly accused with the celebration of infamous rights, or rather orgies, which the popish church found it convenient to lay to the charge of all whom it thought right to class under the title of heretics. The church, it is well known, claimed the right of judging witchcraft, by considering it as a heresy, or as akin to heresy, and it is probable that, by the confusion of ideas thus produced, the orgies of the Gnostics were transferred to the Sabbath of the witches.

During the period of which we have been speaking, men of sense in Germany, and the better educated and less bigoted portion of the clergy, appear to have looked upon the whole as a delusion; witchcraft was a crime, inasmuch as it was an act of vulgar superstition. Some of the early councils forbid the belief in it, and consequently the partaking in any of its practices and ceremonies. It only rose to higher estimation in the age of inquisitors. Towards the middle and during the latter half of the fifteenth century the question of witchcraft began to be much agitated. The wholesale persecutions of witches had commenced with the celelebrated Council of Constance (1414 to 1418), which had proscribed the doctrines of Wycliffe, and condemned John Huss and Jerome of Prague to the flames. One of the inquisitors of this period, a Swiss friar preacher named John Nider, published a work on the various sins and crimes against religion, under the title of "Formicarium" (or the Ant-hill), the fifth book of which is devoted to the subject of sorcery. This book was published towards the year 1440, for it speaks of the latter events of the life of Joane of Arc as having occurred within ten

years; and the author's information, relative to sorcerers, appears to be mainly derived from the inquisitor of Berne, named Peter, who had distinguished himself by his activity in the pursuit of witches and sorcerers, and had caused a great number of them to be burnt.

Nowhere is the connexion between sorcery and magic and the earlier mythology of the people more evident than in the history of witchcraft in Scotland—a country in which this mythology had preserved its sway over the popular imagination much longer than in the civilised south. Hence we find in that country, the wild character of many parts of which were peculiarly calculated to foster superstitions of this description, that they are found in nearly the same shape in the sixteenth century in which they had appeared in England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although, in Scotland, witchcraft had not been magnified and modified by the systematical proceedings of ecclesiastical inquisitors, and it presented itself, therefore, in a much less sophisticated form, still it made its appearance, as in other parts of Europe, in judiciary proceedings, as an instrument of political or personal animosity, and was used where other grounds of accusation were too weak to effect the objects of the accuser. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, the Earl of Mar, brother of James III., was accused of consulting with witches and sorcerers, in order to shorten the king's days, and he was bled to death in his own lodgings, without even being brought to a trial. Twelve witches, and three or four wizards, were subsequently burnt at Edinburgh, as his accomplices. In the century following, in 1532, a woman of rank and beauty, Janet Douglas, Lady Glammis, was charged with having caused the death of her first husband by sorcery, but escaped, to be tried and burnt, amid the general commiseration of her countrymen, for a similar crime, which she was said to have attempted against the person of James V., with a view to the restoration of the Douglas family, the object of James's special hatred. In these executions, Mr. Wright justly remarks, death was the punishment rather of the treason than of the sorcery; and the first simple case of the latter which is met with in the records of the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland is that of Agnes Mullikine, *alias* Bessie Boswell, of Dumfermline, who, in 1563, was "banished and exiled" for witchcraft—a mild sentence, which seldom occurs in subsequent times.

In Scotland, as for the most part also in England, it is to be remarked that the witches received their power, not from the evil one, but from the "fairy folk" with whom, at least until a late period, their connexion was more innocent, and was characterised by none of the disgusting particularities which distinguished the proceedings of their sisters on the continent. According to an old and popular ballad—as ancient, perhaps, as the fourteenth century—the celebrated Thomas of Ercildowne obtained his supposed skill in prophecy from his connexion with the queen of faery.

The search of treasures was one of the most usual occupations of the magicians of old. Thus, in 1574, we find Dr. Dee petitioning Lord Burghley to obtain for him from Queen Elizabeth a license of monopoly of treasure-digging in England. The frequent discoveries of Roman, or Saxon, or medieval deposits, in the course of accidental digging—then probably more common than at present—Mr. Wright points out as enough to whet the appetite of the needy or the miserly; and the belief

that the sepulchral barrow, or the long-deserted ruin, or even the wild and haunted glen, concealed treasures of gold and silver, has been carried down to our own days in a variety of local legends. Mr. Wright gives numerous instances in which it is evident that, whatever confidence the treasure-seekers may have placed in the magical part of their performances, they did not neglect to select appropriate situations, as tumuli, barrows, Roman burial-grounds, and ruins of various descriptions.

The English magicians, as Dr. Dee and his followers, although there is no exploit recorded of them which will bear comparison with what the celebrated Benvenuto Cellini relates himself to have been eye-witness of in the amphitheatre of the Colosseum, are still by no means among the least interesting personages in the general history of magic and witchcraft. Dr. Dee was more a victim to delusions and imposture than himself an impostor, but he left behind him few who were so honest as himself. Of these, one of the most remarkable was Simon Forman, who has a melancholy celebrity as connected with the crimes of the reign of James I., and who was succeeded by the still more remarkable characters William Lilly and Elias Ashmole. "The first half of the seventeenth century," says Mr. Wright, "was the age of the English magicians."

Some of the instances given of witchcraft in England will be to many minds, however, rather repulsive than interesting. The case of the witches of Warboys, for example, betrays such gross and superstitious ignorance on the part of all concerned, embracing physicians, clergymen, and persons moving in the best society of the time, that common sense is positively revolted by the details; others, again—as the Lancashire witches and the Scotch witches—present features in which there is so much that is strange and poetically suggestive, that the narrative of their exploits rivets every chord of the heart. Still, it is certainly altogether a truly dark story, whether we turn over the pages with Mr. Wright, and smile at the adventures of Doctor Torralva—which one cannot help doing even when he is in the clutches of the Inquisition—or we sympathise with the Ursulines of Loudon, or pity a Louis Gaufridi and a Marechale d'Ancre; or, turning to our own country, we find revealed the wickedness of an Hopkins, the brainless aversions of a James, or the more reprehensible vindictiveness of Sir Mathew Hale and Chief Justice Holt—men who should have known better—down to the doings of Satan in the New World (and where it is not impossible, the human mind evidently running in cycles, that his Satanic Majesty may yet manifest himself in as great force as he has ever been seen);—still it is the same thing—a mingled story of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, and bigotry; or of private or ecclesiastical or political persecution and revenge. "As the agitation," says Mr. Wright, "which brought it into importance subsided, and it could no longer be made a useful instrument in political or religious warfare, sorcery became more trivial and ridiculous in its details, until it was even discarded by the vulgar."

SPECULATION.

BY DR. DELANY.

Mr. Peter Green, the head of an old-established mercantile house, was engaged as usual in a careful study of the share-list. This was the first duty he performed on entering his counting-house in the morning, but upon this occasion his studies did not seem to afford much satisfaction. For several days stocks had been rapidly falling, and the speculative merchant saw with alarm that various railway schemes, in which he had invested a large amount of capital, would prove ruinous to him unless the market took a favourable turn, of which there was no immediate prospect. While anxiously considering whether he should sell a part of his stock at a great loss, or wait the chance of fortune, the door was opened, and his friend, Mr. Gatherall, a parliamentary agent for sundry bubble projects, entered, and was warmly received.

"You're just returned from London, I presume?" said Mr. Green, after the usual morning greetings. "I was very sorry to hear that the 'Great Ram and Bogside Junction' had been thrown out on the standing orders. I shall lose a few hundreds, for the expenses have been enormous. But is there no chance of the decision being overruled?"

"None whatever," replied Gatherall. "I fought hard with the opposition; but as our plans were shamefully incorrect, they won almost every disputed point. Fields and farm-steadings had been omitted by the surveyor, and, worse than all, there was an error of sixty feet clearly made out in our levels."

"I told you what was likely to be the result, when you employed that drunken fellow Flaff as your engineer."

"He's ruined now, at all events, for no one will employ him again, and I am resolved not to pay him for his surveys. However, we can discuss stocks at some other time. I wish to speak to you on as important a subject. Your brother Andrew died while I was in London, and you have taken possession, I understand, of his whole fortune."

"Certainly. He died intestate."

"It is of that," answered Gatherall, "I wish to speak at present; and perhaps it would be as well to go into your own room, as I don't want to be disturbed."

It may not be amiss, while these gentlemen are privately engaged, to furnish our readers with a little knowledge regarding their history and character.

Mr. Green was a complete man of business. He had no aspirations except in trade, few thoughts or cares out of the commercial world, and little enjoyment beyond what was derived from contemplating his gains. From a very humble position he had fought his way to wealth by dint of unwearied patience and industry in the collection of small gains, and through the use of means which would have shocked a strictly honourable mind. He never hesitated in overreaching a friend in business, or resorting to underhand practices in speculation; and thus, though at all times accounted perfectly honest, he was not esteemed by his acquaintance, or named for civic honours by his fellow-citizens.

Mr. Green had a daughter, named Rachel, a beautiful girl of nineteen

While yet a child she had lost her mother, and having no one in particular to guide her youth, for her father, beyond providing instructors, rarely interfered with her actions, she had early been taught to think and act for herself, and had, in consequence, grown up to womanhood with more strength of character and energy of mind than usually belong to her sex. However sordid in other matters, Mr. Green had spared no outlay in her education, or in the indulgence of her tastes. In all the accomplishments belonging to her rank she was perfect. She sung and played with exquisite feeling and skill; drew with accuracy and vigour; and spoke French and Italian with fluency. In her disposition there was a certain tinge of romance, assuredly not inherited from her father, which displayed itself in her love of poetry, of nature, and of all high and generous sentiments. To her father's petty wants and comforts she carefully attended. Though stern and unfeeling to others, he was kind to her, and loved her as much as his sordid nature would allow. Indeed, he was somewhat proud of her beauty and accomplishments, and could not but feel that she was the great attraction of his home—its sole grace and charm.

Mr. Gatherall commenced his career as a lawyer and had been very successful. In 1845 when folly was rampant, and every one eager to have a pluck at the public pigeons, he signalised himself in getting up various abortive railway schemes, for which he acted as solicitor to his own great profit, and the deep loss and chagrin of the duped and disappointed shareholders. He was an exceedingly clever man, possessing a large amount of superficial knowledge, and blessed with a wide circle of influential friends, who reposed great faith in his abilities. There were few who could surpass him in drawing a promising prospectus, or fighting through the details of a bad scheme before parliamentary committees, and fewer still who could show such a bold front when it went to wreck, and the conduct of the directors had to be vindicated.

The walls of his chambers were hung with county maps, upon which were drawn in every direction strong black, blue, and red lines, indicating the course of railways he had either before parliament or was projecting for the ensuing session. Setting at complete defiance the natural obstacles of a country, he had these lines running between certain places, along valleys, and over hills, where assuredly the gradients could not be described as "easy." It was of no use telling him that the country was wild and hilly, that workable gradients could not be got, and that there was no traffic to remunerate the shareholders. "It must do," Mr. Gatherall would exclaim, "for it's the only scheme left us to propose in that quarter." So out the prospectus would come, and thousands applied for shares. Such is a sample of a class of clever and unprincipled men who, by adding stimulants to the popular frenzy, were much to blame for many of the evils which attended the railway mania of 1845-6.

Whatever was the nature of the long and close private conversation between Messrs. Green and Gatherall, it tended much to disturb the temper of the former. Throughout the forenoon he was restless and uneasy and evidently busied with thoughts of no pleasant kind. This was a state of temper by no means favourable to the projects of our hero, Bob Douglas, as he was familiarly styled, a gay dashing medical student, who in the course of the day presented himself at his uncle's counting-

house in the hope of procuring some money, the only purpose, indeed, for which he ever called there.

Douglas was the only son of a sister of Mr. Green, and early left an orphan. His education, however, had been attended to, and his wants liberally supplied by his deceased uncle, from whom he once had high expectations. In truth, Bob had always been regarded as his heir, and on that account was encouraged in his addresses to his cousin, Rachel Green. The death of his kind uncle by a stroke of apoplexy destroyed Bob's brilliant hopes, for, dying intestate, Mr. Peter Green seized his fortune, and although he knew well what his brother's intentions were with respect to his nephew, he declined to fulfil them. The strong mutual attachment which Mr. Green had himself fostered between his daughter and him when heir-apparent to a large fortune, was now sternly discountenanced. Sometimes he was invited to dinner, and occasionally received a small sum of money with a great show of liberality.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Green, when he observed him, "what is it you want to-day—money, I suppose?"

"My dear uncle," answered Bob, in his most insinuating manner, "the fact is, I have been owing a small bill to a tradesman for some time, and as I am threatened with an action if I don't pay it immediately, I just took the liberty of calling to ask you for the amount."

"You might have saved yourself the trouble," answered Green; "I can't do anything for you at present. You are becoming extortionate, sir; why, it is not two months since I gave you ten pounds."

"But you know, uncle, I cannot study without means, and such a small sum as ten pounds goes a short way. Really, you must endeavour to do something, or it's all up with me."

"How much do you want?" growled the uncle.

"Twenty pounds would do."

"Eh! what, twenty pounds! How the devil do you get so far in debt without means of repayment?"

"It's an old debt," said Bob; "and had my poor uncle Andrew lived, I would not have required to ask you to pay it; but, since you have succeeded to his fortune, you might spare something to a nephew he never allowed to want."

"Ay, ay, my brother was very foolish in that. You must not expect me to be so. Now hear, sir; although I won't advance you this twenty pounds to spend with your foolish associates, I shall make you an allowance of fifty pounds a year till your studies are finished. But remember this," said Mr. Green, sternly, "it shall be stopped at once if I ever find you in my house or see you speaking to my daughter. From every one I hear such shocking accounts of your behaviour, and of the bad company you keep, that you are no longer fit to enter a decent man's house. Now, begone, sir, and apply to your studies. I have nothing more to say, and so wish you a good morning."

With a sinking heart Douglas left his uncle's counting-house as empty in pocket as when he entered it. His prospects were now black enough, for he found himself in debt, and fast getting out of credit. But what galled him most was to be denied admission to his uncle's house. It was evident now that his fond dream of a union with his cousin was not likely soon to be realised, if, indeed, it was not ended for ever. Still the heart of our medical student was too bold and sanguine to despond long, and,

being confident of Rachel's affection, he felt that he could defy and outwit the watchfulness of his uncle, and meet her in spite of every barrier. Leaving him to ruminate on this, and other subjects of a less pleasant nature, as he walked homewards, we will precede him, and have a look beforehand into his "airy and comfortable lodgings, delightfully situated," as the advertisements say, "in a central part of the town." These were shared with a fellow-student of kindred disposition and pursuits. Frank Heigarth had, in excess, all the good and bad qualities which belong to an over-generous nature. Though in possession of a liberal allowance, the openness with which his hand dealt out supplies to all who stood in want of assistance, combined with expensive habits, and a certain thoughtlessness in money matters, led him often into difficulties, which required all the indulgence of his father to relieve him from. Amidst much idleness, occasional dissipation, and irregularity of conduct, like Douglas, he was highly distinguished as a student, and had won honours in every class.

Seated before the parlour fire smoking a meerschaum pipe, his face wearing more than usual gravity, we now find Heigarth and his friend Verdant Flummery, a clerical student, who had just looked in. Verdant was a strange compound of character. Philosophy was his sole study; indeed, he was so thoroughly imbued with German mysticism, that we verily believe he doubted the material existence of the chair on which he sat, and looked the picture of profundity.

"What is it that makes you so thoughtful this morning?" asked Flummery, during a lull in the conversation.

"The want of money, to be sure," answered Heigarth, "which, as Sam Weller says, is an out and out epidemic."

"Pooh! that's an easy matter for you to get over. Tap the governor."

"Tap Æsculapius as easily! The fact is, I've already sickened the governor with applications, and although in hourly anticipation of an answer to a letter I sent him a few days ago, begging thirty pounds, I am by no means sanguine of succeeding. I've made up my mind for the worst, and, hang it! though not possessed of as much as will pay toll for a dead ass, I sha'n't despair yet. *Nil desperandum* is my motto. Luck, I find, always turns up in the end."

"How stands Bob at present?—hard run, too, I suppose?"

"Oh, as bad as myself, or I should not want. Bob's fortune has been low since the death of his uncle, and old Green is such a rascally Jew, that he would allow him to starve were he not to keep perpetually dunning. He is at him just now, and I hope will succeed, for the sooner something drops into our treasury the better, as we're over head and ears in debt."

As this was said Douglas entered the room, wearing an expression of countenance which sufficiently indicated his want of success.

"Old Sugarplum has not bled, I see," remarked Heigarth.

"No," answered Bob; "he dismissed me very uncivilly, and told me never to enter his house, or speak to his daughter; both of which commands I shall disobey on the first opportunity. In the mean time, what's to be done? for money must be had by hook or by crook."

"I wish to Heaven, Flummery, we had some of your philosophy to support us; or, better, that you could prove to our satisfaction that our wants are only ideal," said Heigarth, as he re-filled his pipe.

"Too many of them, Frank, are of that kind," answered Verdant, "and, though you laugh at my philosophy, you really would be none the worse of a little practical wisdom to control your immoderate desires, the gratification of which empties your purse, and gives you many a morning of remorse."

"Bah!" said Bob. "What say you, Heigarth, to start some grand scheme, say an 'Universal Philanthropic Association,' for the suppression of something or other? It might pay well."

"Or suppose," chimed in Verdant, "you take a hall and give a series of lectures on prevalent vices, and have, of course, a collection to defray expenses."

"That requires too much trouble," said Heigarth, laughing. "I'd rather turn to and invent an universal pill for curing all diseases. In the meantime, let's have some brandy to sharpen our wits and drive away care—

> To think about trifles is trifling and folly,
> For the right end of life is to live and be jolly."

Mrs. Thrifty, the landlady, was immediately summoned, and, on producing the brandy, announced that a gentleman wished to see Mr. Heigarth.

"Some dun, I suppose," said Frank; "never mind, show him in, Mrs. Thrifty."

The person who now entered displayed, in his manner and appearance, the well-known characteristics of a lawyer's clerk. He carried in his hand a hat, which, though broken in the crown, showed, by the careful brushing, that it was the object of special attention. His well-worn black trousers were tightly strapped over a pair of dilapidated shoes, and his light-coloured vest was buttoned high up, to conceal, as far as possible, a shirt of a dirty-yellow hue. The sleeves of his coat were threadbare, and, as well as the trousers, showed the stains of many a carouse. His face, though somewhat red and swollen through midnight dissipation, was agreeable in expression, and indicated a considerable degree of acuteness, and no small amount of good-humour. Such was the individual who now presented himself, and was at once recognised by Douglas and Heigarth as a gentleman who, in the course of their rambles one night, they had met in a sort of "free-and-easy," over which he presided, to the high delight of all lovers of comic songs, puns, and humorous stories.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Swipes, for such was his name, "I little thought when I undertook the business I now appear on, that I should meet persons of your respectability, and with whom I think I once had the pleasure of fraternising."

"What's the row?" asked Heigarth.

"Serious enough," answered Swipes. "I wait upon you at the instance of my esteemed friend, the landlord of the Golden Votch, to solicit payment of his account, amounting to 6*l.* 10s. 8d."

"Oh, is that all?" said Frank. "Don't disturb yourself about the matter—the fellow will be paid off the first spare cash we have—so sit down, Swipes, and have a glass of brandy, and hand the account here, as I want to light my pipe."

"Doubtless it's all right with you," answered Swipes, drawing in a

chair, "only the Golden Votch does not wish you to desert his house in consequence of the debt. He says it may lie over till the wind rises."

"I wish, Swipes," said Douglas, "some other gentlemen of our acquaintance would show the same leniency."

Mrs. Thrifty here entered the room, and handed a letter to Heigarth.

"By the powers of phlebotomy!" exclaimed Frank, on opening it, "the governor has come down handsome after all, and sent me an order on the Royal for 50*l*. We must have it cashed without delay."

In a few minutes Flummery was on his way to the bank, leaving his friends deep in the mystery of compounding a tumbler of brandy toddy. This unexpected addition to their funds raised their spirits to an unwonted height. Heigarth was in ecstasies; and Douglas, triumphing over his bad fortune and thwarted love, lent himself to the humour of the hour. Swipes, seeing how things stood, ingratiated himself with a few well-timed jokes and puns, and gave up all thoughts of attending to his employer's business. When Verdant returned he found them indulging in extravagant mirth. Swipes had just finished one of his best stories, and seemed, from the familiar attitude he had assumed, and the jovial smile of his countenance, to have resolved, in his own phrase, "to make a day of it."

Flummery, though himself a prosy character, could relish a jest even when bordering on the verge of propriety, was delighted with the wit of the lawyer's clerk, and expressed himself much pleased with his accurate mimicry.

"Why, sir, I feel honoured by your opinion," answered Swipes, "and assure you that, as I am much fettered in my present shabby situation, I intend, if times don't mend, to turn actor, and try the *Jem Bag's* line of business."

"What, turn low comedian!" exclaimed Bob.

"Undoubtedly; low comedy's my forte, and pity that I should be altogether lost to the world."

But leaving our friends to enjoy the humours of Swipes, and to realise all the blessings which flow from the combined influence of pure cognac and rich racy wit, we will turn for a little to introduce other characters belonging to our tale.

On going home to dinner in the afternoon, old Green duly informed his daughter he had forbidden Douglas ever to enter his house again. Rachel gazed with astonishment upon her father on hearing such unwelcome news, but said nothing, for she knew his temper only required provocation to grow irascible on this subject. Mr. Green was at some pains to explain the necessity of this proceeding. He enlarged at great length on all the faults, real or supposed, in Douglas's character, and especially pointed out the danger he considered likely to follow from countenancing him.

"You know, Rachel," he added, "I have long been much averse to the manner in which you encouraged the scamp, for he is nothing else; but as I feel you would not do anything to vex me, I hope now, when I mention it, you will give up his company entirely, and, in fact, all thoughts of him, as I am determined on this point. It were a disgrace, indeed, to see you married to such a man; nothing but misery could result from it; so forget him, Rachel, and I will find a husband worthy of you. What say you to young Gatherall? He is a fine youth."

"Young Gatherall!" exclaimed Rachel, almost in horror. "Surely you cannot be in earnest; you know I hate the sight of him."

"But why should you hate him? He's not bad-looking, and will sooner or later be immensely rich."

"Don't speak of him, father," answered Rachel; "since you have mentioned him as a husband for me, I detest him ten times more than I ever did, and will show him my dislike the first time we meet."

"Do nothing rashly, Rachel," said her father, solemnly. "Receive him decently at all times; you really can form no idea of the important consequences which rest upon this matter."

Here the conversation dropped. Old Green fell into a drowsy state, and Rachel soon after retired to her room to give vent to her misery in a flood of tears.

No sleep had poor Rachel all that night. She was too well acquainted with her father's temper to doubt the earnestness of his purpose, yet by no mode of conjecture could she arrive at a probable reason for his sudden anxiety to marry her to young Gatherall. That he should disapprove of her cousin was easily accounted for; indeed, with all her partiality for him, she could not hide from herself that his conduct was blameable in very many respects; still she loved him with the utmost sincerity of affection, for much in his behaviour which to others seemed exceedingly bad—such as his late hours, his occasional excesses in company, his extravagance, his bold and free opinions on all subjects—appeared often in her sight as the faults of generous youth, and the failings of a high, though ill-regulated mind, which time and experience would modify, if not entirely eradicate.

Next morning at breakfast she met her father, who seemed to her more than usually kind. He did not allude to the conversation of the previous evening, and made no remark on her appearance, although it was easy to observe she had passed a sleepless and unhappy night.

Among Rachel's female acquaintance there was one of her own age, Agnes Cowper, who, more than any other, enjoyed her confidence and esteem. It was not until the following day that she had an opportunity of visiting her friend, whom she found in very bad humour, and readier to revile the whole male sex as faithless and unworthy of a woman's thoughts, than sympathise with her unhappy position. The cause of this was, that Verdant Flummery, who had long been received by Agnes as an acknowledged lover, had been guilty of the heinous offence of breaking an appointment.

"Only think of it!" exclaimed Miss Cowper. "I remained at home all yesterday forenoon, waiting upon the wretch, who had promised to make some calls with me, and he never appeared, or sent a word of apology. Worse than that, I learn from Betty that, instead of paying attention to his studies, he has been away dissipating with your precious cousin and his worthy associate, Heigarth. But wait till I see him—he shall smart for this."

Much more of a similar kind was vented before Rachel was allowed to recite her own miseries, to which Agnes, in spite of her sulky humour, paid great attention, and could not help wishing that some husband were offered to her, that she might show Verdant her appreciation of his ungallant conduct.

"What sort of a fellow is he, this Gatherall? I don't recollect of ever seeing him. Is he handsome?"

"Oh, he's a consummate bore, without an idea in his head. He scarcely reaches to my shoulders, and has a face almost as coarse and inexpressive as a Hottentot. He never opens his mouth but to speak of the theatres and actors; and his mode of speaking is truly abominable, for the vulgar creature apes what he supposes to be fine English, and talks of 'spicy scenes' and 'stunning sights,' till I grow quite sick of him. It was but the other night that he bored me to death about a comedy he was writing for the 'Aymarket, as he called it. The plot, he gravely assured me, was superior to anything that had appeared since Sheridan's time; so good, indeed, that he would not part with it for a hundred pounds. 'But,' said he, 'I may as well read you an act.' 'Heaven help me!' I said to myself, as I stuffed my handkerchief into my mouth to prevent yawning. However, he would not take a hint, but went on reading, stopping occasionally to ask, 'How I liked that?' 'Won't that make them laugh?' At last he treated me to a dolorous thing he called a comic song, which gave me an opportunity of laughing, and I then made my escape. Oh! it disgusts, me, Agnes, to think of the creature. How poor Bob would look if he knew who was his rival. I wish I could see him, to let him know what has happened."

"And I wish I could see Verdant, that I might tell him never to call here again," said Agnes. "He has behaved most unfeelingly."

Mrs. Thrifty had a niece who was waiting-maid to the Cowpers, and useful to the two young ladies in their little love intrigues. Her assistance was now called in; and, after many instructions, she was despatched to her aunt's with the double commission of leaving a note from Rachel to her cousin, and making inquiries into the backslidings of Flummery.

When the faithful Betty arrived at her aunt's house she found that model landlady in no pleasant humour, and before a word could be edged in about her errand, she had to listen to an account of many grievances.

"Nobody can tell," began Mrs. Thrifty, "the miseries of a lodging-house keeper. There's my best parlour has run off with a month's board and my silver spoons. The garret is ready for flight; and the author owes me thirty shillings, which I am to get when his new play comes out; but who knows when that will be? He's done no good since he took to play-writing, and never thinks of attending his shop. He says he'll carve his way to fortune; but I think he'd manage it better with a chisel than a pen. His queer friend, the actor, whom he brought here, is no better, for he's wearing my late husband's best shirts. But what distresses me most is, that Mr. Douglas keeps such bad hours. He went out two nights ago with that scamp Heigarth and Mr. Flummery, who should behave better if he expects to get a kirk, and none of them have yet been heard of. It's really scandalous!"

"Have you no idea where they are?" inquired Betty.

"None whatever. Mr. Flummery's friends have been here seeking him, so it's certain they are together yet. But here's a gentleman who can tell us something about them," said Mrs. Thrifty, as Mr. Swipes was shown in by the servant-of-all-work.

"How d'ye do, Mrs. Thrifty?" asked that gentleman, in his blandest manner. "Is Mr. Douglas at home?"

"No: I have not seen him since he went out with you two nights ago."

"Bless me, I wonder where they can be! I left them yesterday morning, and understood they were then going home. Douglas asked me to call at this hour, and said he was sure of being at home."

"Here they are," exclaimed Mrs. Thrifty, as she went out in person to answer a violent summons of the door-bell. She had scarcely gone when Swipes, who in the course of his gallantries had made some acquaintance with Betty, laughingly asked how she was?

"None the better of you, Mr. Swipes. You're just what the play calls a gay deceiver."

"Don't say that, Betty, when you know it was you that deserted me, and for a big, newly-imported Irish policeman from Skibbereen. Didn't I see him come up from your area?"

"Oh, you jealous wretch! I scarcely ever spoke to him. He was down inquiring about the washing of clothes that was stolen, nobody knew how."

"Do you really say so, my dear?" exclaimed the ardent Swipes, as he gave her a hearty smack on the lips.

This by-play was interrupted by Mrs. Thrifty desiring Swipes to join the medical students, who received him with such demonstrations as showed how highly they relished his powers of wit and humour. Heigarth and Douglas were, as they expressed it, "quite fresh," but Flummery presented a woful spectacle. He was truly in a dilapidated condition. His appearance at the best was not very prepossessing, but now, under the influence of alcohol, his thin dark features looked deplorably dirty and careworn; the collar of his shirt was soiled and broken, the breast stained with liquor, and his whole outward man was much in want of brushing. There he sat, however, in glorious independence, his hat cocked on one side of his head, and a cigar thrust clumsily into his mouth, humming, now and then, a song, the only words of which that could be distinguished, from his indistinct utterance, being "dark-haired girl."

"Hillo!" cried Swipes, "what girl is this Verdant has got enamoured with?"

"Never you mind, Swipes; she's an angel, 'the dark-haired girl.'"

Shortly afterwards Flummery fell into a dozing state, and, by-and-by, began snoring in what Swipes styled a "very edifying manner."

Douglas, meanwhile, had seen Betty and received Rachel's note, which he briefly answered. The faithful handmaid was assured that Flummery was all safe, and desired to say nothing more to her mistress, as it would break poor Verdant's heart if he thought she knew of his wanderings. To do Betty justice, she did not, on her return, say anything of the interesting condition of Flummery, a full account of which she had got from her aunt, knowing well how vexed "young missis" would be; indeed, her heart was too deeply engaged in all true love affairs to allow her, by inconsiderate speech, to mar their smooth course.

It is not our business to record the adventures of our three students during the time when, in the language of Swipes, they were "under a cloud." That gentleman was regaled with a particular account of various scenes in which Verdant had distinguished himself, of a riot in the "Golden Votch" with the landlord, who had received payment of

his bill, and got so jolly in consequence, that the watchmen of the night disturbed the orgies, together with other adventures and hair-breadth escapes, which we willingly consign to oblivion.

"You seem to have had a rare time of it since I left you," remarked Swipes; "my own fortune was not so good, for I lost my situation by spending Monday with you. Yesterday morning I went to business with no very clear head, and had just mixed and drank a soda powder, according to ancient custom after a heavy night, when the governor came in and began lecturing me for neglect of work. Not being sober, I felt myself very independent, and, instead of an apology, gave him my free opinion of the shabbiness of his conduct in not advancing my salary, which so exasperated him, that I was ordered out, a command I immediately complied with, and walked down stairs, the world before me, and twenty-five shillings in my pocket."

"That was unfortunate," said Heigarth. "Bob and I will endeavour to find something for you to do."

"That's settled already, my boy, for just as I was wending my way to seek consolation in the Golden Votch, I met a brother clerk who told me there was a vacancy in Gatherall and Son's; so I called up and was accepted. The situation, however, is not so good."

"Gatherall and Son's," exclaimed Douglas. "They were law-agents to my late uncle, and, as far as I could ever learn, a precious pair of scamps."

"There's no doubt of that. Old Gatherall is well known as a plotting rascal; and for the son, he's a complete ass."

"I say, Bob, when Gatherall is such a fellow as Swipes describes, d'ye think there is any likelihood of his having cheated you in your uncle's affairs?" said Heigarth.

"I should not wonder. I am certain that if anything was to be made by suppressing papers, he would not hesitate in doing so. I have always thought it strange, that such a business man as my late uncle was should have left no will. But let us consult Swipes."

To Swipes was related the whole matter. Bob described his uncle's fondness for him, his generosity, and the certainty he always had of being his heir. The redoubted clerk sat for some time pondering on the narrative.

"It is quite likely," he said, "that no will was made, your uncle having little reason to apprehend a sudden death; still, I will keep a sharp look-out among old Gatherall's parchments."

"Do so, Swipes," said Bob; and the subject dropped.

The conclave soon after broke up, Swipes undertaking to see Flummery home. This was no easy task, for Verdant's limbs were at present uncommonly weak. As Swipes afterwards informed Heigarth:

"All the way he was swearing like a trooper, and vowing eternal friendship for me. When we reached his home, I planted him as dead as a nail against the door, rung the bell, and had the indescribable felicity of seeing him sink into the arms of his worthy father, who lugged him in head foremost. He'll make a decent parson though, for they were ever a set of good fellows, as far as eating and drinking is concerned."

On the following day, at an hour which he had named in his note, Douglas visited his cousin, whom he found in very low spirits. Her father

had that morning again introduced the subject which now seemed nearest his heart; and although she heard with apparent indifference that young Gatherall would likely call in the course of the day, her breast was swelling with indignation, and she internally vowed that she would receive him in such a manner as would convince him he need not repeat his visit. For the first time in life she felt really angry with her father. Her quick intuitive mind perceived that his anxiety, so suddenly manifested for her union with Gatherall, was created by some motive of deep interest which by no course of reasoning could she quite understand; for, although he threw out various dark hints, he refused to give a satisfactory explanation for exerting his authority as a parent.

It was in this unhappy state of mind that Douglas found her, and partly divining the cause of the unwonted seriousness on her brow, he commenced to rally her with some spirit.

"It's true enough, Rachel, that your father has forbidden me to enter this house, and you to speak to me; but what of that? here I am in spite of every obstacle. You remember what Burns says:

'O luve will venture in
Where it daurna weel be seen;
O luve will venture in
Where wisdom ance has been."

"But, oh, Bob, if my father should know of this he will be so dreadfully enraged. You really have no idea how exasperated he is against you, and how anxious that I should marry young Gatherall."

"Marry Gatherall's son!" exclaimed Douglas in astonishment; "marry such a coxcomb, such a heartless puppy. I was not aware of this before. Tell me all."

Rachel did so amidst many questions and interruptions, and had just concluded, when a servant tapped at the door. Rachel ran and opened it, and heard that Mr. Gatherall was below wishing to see her.

"Why did you let him in? why not tell him I was particularly engaged, and could not see any one? Bid him wait. Now, Bob, you must leave me; some other time we will talk over this, and arrange what is to be done."

"No, Rachel, I shall remain, and, for the sake of fun, hide myself in this closet. I want to see how the ass behaves himself."

"I cannot give in to that; you must go, Bob; it is unfair, it is ungentlemanly, to stay and overhear our conversation."

"I am determined upon it," said Douglas, ensconcing himself in the closet, guided more by the feelings of a rollicking medical student, to whom fun was dear, than strict notions of propriety. Rachel did not insist upon his leaving; for, to tell the truth, the pretty creature had a spice of roguery in her own composition.

John Gatherall, junior, was a very diminutive, but very stout, young man. His face was large, "stale, flat, and unprofitable;" indeed, its only expression was that of vulgar impudence, and it was rendered more disagreeable by a dirty, greasy complexion. With a low theatrical bow he advanced to meet Rachel, who offered a finger to his outstretched hand, and motioned him to a seat with ill-suppressed contempt, which the spoony was too obtuse to perceive, while she sat down herself upon a sofa, on the opposite side of the room, and answered his small-talk in

monosyllables. This soon had its discouraging effect, and the conversation gradually languished, till it died away entirely. An awkward pause ensued, which Rachel made no attempt to break, and Gatherall bit his lips with vexation; for, with all his vanity, he could not but see that he was coldly received. This was a very different reception from what he had anticipated. His father had informed him, in high glee, that Green's consent was obtained, and that nothing was necessary but to step in and win. What added considerably to his embarrassment, was the knowledge that Rachel knew the object of his visit. Never before had he felt so uncomfortably situated. His usual forwardness of manner quite deserted him. His large stream of unmeaning small-talk was suddenly frozen up, the colour mounted to his cheek, and he almost wished he could decently effect his retreat.

"I am afraid," he at length managed to stammer out, "that—that I have interrupted you, Miss Green."

"Oh, by no means, Mr. Gatherall." This gave him fresh impetus, and he continued: "I called, Miss Green, chiefly on account—ah—in fact—in consequence—ah—of some family arrangement; but—in short, perhaps your father has explained all."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Gatherall. If you have anything to communicate, I am all attention."

Nothing could be more freezing than the manner in which this was said. The reviving courage of Gatherall was crushed. In vain he attempted to pursue the subject. The words died away upon his lips; so, after a few minutes' nervous shuffling on his chair, he sheepishly stammered out something about a business engagement, and bade her good morning.

"Good morning," she answered, slightly bowing to him; and rising, she rang the bell for the servant to show the door to the unfortunate youth.

With a loud laugh Douglas burst from his hiding-place.

"After all," he said, "I never knew such a silly fellow. You did well, Rachel, to keep silent. It left the ass to his own slender resources; and I am certain, judging from the miserable expression of his vulgar face when he went out (for I stole a peep), he won't trouble you again."

Without the fear of further disturbance the lovers now discussed their plans. Come what would, Rachel promised to be true to him, and hoped, rather than expected, her father would relent. To bring about this desirable end, Douglas resolved to amend his conduct, so that no fault might be found with him on that score.

John Gatherall, junior, returned to his counting-house, and informed his father of the reception he had got, and of his strong determination to give up the suit.

"The truth is," he said, "I could never bring myself to say a word to her on the subject. She looked at me so haughtily, and spoke so contemptuously, all the while knowing what my errand was, that I give it up as a bad case."

His father, on hearing the full particulars of the interview, flew into a rage, and told his son that he had behaved like a d——d ass as he was.

On the evening of the same day, Heigarth and Douglas were sitting

quietly by the parlour-fire, discussing the lecture of the morning. It was coming near the time when both would be called up for examination; and though neither felt any fear of passing with honours, they knew the necessity of cramming for the occasion. Various plans of study were talked of, and the better to enable them to settle the arrangement, Heigarth proposed a tumbler of hot brandy. The liquor and accompaniments had just been placed upon the table, when Flummery made his appearance.

"Well, Verdant, how feel you to-day? my prince of philosophers, and jolliest of clerical students," asked Heigarth. "I hope you are none the worse of your late outbreak, although your face is as long as one of your father's admonitions, and ten times duller."

"Oh, I'm in a horrid condition. My clerical reputation is now quite gone. I am afraid I must give up all hopes of a parish church, and hide my head in a colonial chapel. 'Villanous company,' as Falstaff says, 'has been the ruin of me.' Verily, I must mend my manners, or bid farewell at once to the honours of the pulpit, and the chance of a Professorship of Moral Philosophy."

"Never fear, Verdant, my boy," said Bob; "take a glass of brandy, and get your spirits up."

As the night wore on the philosopher recovered himself, and shone brightly on his favourite subject, the "doctrine of innate ideas," which he maintained with great warmth, Douglas and Heigarth taking the other side. They had got deep into one of the mistiest and most unprofitable of arguments, when they were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Swipes, in a state of high excitement, and evidently half tipsy.

"Hurrah! Mr. Douglas," he shouted; "I give you joy; let's shake hands. Hurrah!"

"What's the matter, Swipes?" they all inquired. "Are you drunk or mad?"

"Half drunk, undoubtedly,—and half mad with joy," answered Swipes.

"Here, Swipes," said Douglas, "take some brandy, and unfold your tale, for I see you've something new for us."

Having composed himself a little, Swipes explained the cause of his unwonted glee:

"In the course of the afternoon, old Gatherall left the office very hurriedly, being late for a meeting he had to attend. Young G. was out on some business with my fellow quill-driver; so, having the establishment to myself, I looked into the governor's room to make observations, as is the custom of all lawyers' clerks. I noticed, at once, that old G. in his hurry, had left the key in a private safe; so I opened it, to see what sort of papers the old rascal kept there. I had turned over two or three, when my eyes suddenly lighted on the title of one. Good gracious! how I stared. It was a minute before I opened the folds. The document proved to be the 'last will and testament of the late Andrew Green.' I glanced over it, and found that, with the exception of a few legacies, he had bequeathed his whole property, real and personal, to his nephew, Robert Douglas."

Here Swipes paused to give room for the loud astonishment of the company.

"Is it a fact, or are you jesting, Swipes?" asked Douglas, who had risen from his seat in great excitement.

"I never spoke truer words in my life," answered Swipes, solemnly.

"Did you copy any part of the document, to show us that it is the case beyond doubt?" asked Heigarth.

"Copy it!" said Swipes, contemptuously; "much good a copy would do in a court of law. No," he added, evidently reserving this information for a grand climax; "no, I did better, I pocketed the deed, and here it is."

The will was read by Swipes from beginning to end, and pronounced by him sound and according to law. When the first burst of joyful surprise was over, the question came, "What was to be done?"

"Have you not brought yourself into trouble by taking this away?" inquired Douglas.

"By no means," answered the doughty clerk. "Here's the way I argued the case with myself. Suppose you had called, and taxed Gatherall with having such a deed in his possession, he would have denied it; you would then have procured a warrant to search, but before you managed that, the document might either have been hidden elsewhere or destroyed. Of course you could have armed yourself with authority at once; but in that case, besides the risk of the will being removed before procuring powers, there was the certainty of a great exposure, which, for the sake of your uncle, who is concerned in the villany, was not desirable. So, upon the whole, the wisest plan, I thought, was to carry it off. Old Gatherall, for his own sake, dare not say one word about the matter."

"But, Swipes, how is my uncle concerned in the fraud?"

"This paper will show you. It was lying beside the will."

This was a secret agreement entered into by Gatherall and Green, whereby the former agreed to destroy the will on receiving a certain sum of money, and a marriage being effected between his son and Miss Green. The estate of the deceased, at Green's death, to devolve upon the young couple and their heirs, failing which arrangement, the property to be sold and divided between the two conspirators.

It is impossible to describe the indignation of Douglas when the whole of this black villany was revealed to him, and yet he felt that he could not hand over the guilty parties to the justice of the law. His love for Rachel forbade that. For her sake he resolved that the nefarious scheme to deprive him of his just rights should be kept secret from the world. Swipes, Flummery, and Heigarth, were accordingly bound by promise to reveal nothing of the transaction; and, with regard to future arrangements, it was settled that Swipes should attend business as usual on the following morning, and that Douglas, accompanied by Heigarth as a witness, should wait upon Gatherall in the course of the forenoon.

For the remainder of that evening the mirth and jollity of the company knew no bounds. Mrs. Thrifty was repeatedly called upon for supplies of hot water; Swipes sung his best songs, and told his stories with unwonted zest. He was the lion of the night, and a thousand times Douglas blessed his stars he had made the acquaintance of the poor lawyer's clerk. Heigarth's humour was boundless. Flummery forgot his recent vows of reformation, and sung "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut." Finally, Swipes rose, and, holding on by the table, proposed, in a glowing speech, the

health of Robert Douglas, Esq., of Hazyden, which was drunk with such enthusiasm, that Mrs. Thrifty was terrified for the downfal of the house. A general shaking of hands ensued; and, as the friends separated, they "heard the chimes of midnight."

On the following day, Douglas, accompanied by Heigarth, called upon Gatherall, and opened proceedings by taxing him with fraud in concealing Andrew Green's will. He denied that such a document existed. Douglas immediately produced it. The sight of the well-known parchment, which he deemed so safe in his possession, made him tremble in every limb; and, unable to control his agitation, he sunk into a chair, pale as death, and terror stamped upon each feature of his harsh countenance. When he had recovered a little, he hurriedly opened his safe. A glance was sufficient.

"Have you another paper?" he asked, in a husky tone.

"Yes," answered Douglas; "I have here a secret agreement between you and Mr. Green."

"Great God! all is known, and we are both ruined."

The violence of his agitation was now extreme. The fact of the discovery had come upon him so suddenly, that his faculties were completely overwhelmed. He did not even inquire how the documents came into Douglas's possession; but that he might easily enough understand. He sought not to explain his conduct; indeed, there was not an extenuating circumstance he could seize upon, but, with eyes wildly staring, he looked from Douglas to Heigarth.

"Mr. Gatherall," said Douglas, "never did man more deserve punishment than you do; yet I have no intention of pushing this affair to extremities. My uncle is as much involved in guilt as yourself, and that circumstance saves you from public exposure, as it will from private whisperings, for I am nearly concerned in burying this infamous transaction in oblivion. All I want is restitution of the property bequeathed to me."

"This is generous, Mr. Douglas, and from my soul I thank you. It is more than I could have believed. Let us send immediately for Mr. Green; it is necessary that he should know what has happened without a moment's delay."

Mr. Green was not long in answering the urgent summons. He looked coldly upon his nephew, and nodded to him, without speaking. To Gatherall was left the painful task of communicating the discovery of their mutual crime. The intelligence struck Green like a shock of electricity. Yet we verily believe that if the secret thoughts of his sordid soul could have been revealed at that moment, there would have been found more regret at the prospect of renouncing his ill-gotten wealth than shame at the discovery of the villanous plot.

From the conversation which ensued, it appeared that Green, at the time of his brother's decease, was unaware of the existence of a will. Gatherall, who was then in London, knowing that the secret was confined to himself and a clerk he had taken with him, but who had then left his service for a better situation, conceived the idea of the plot; and, unwilling to trust himself to writing, quietly allowed Peter Green to take possession of his brother's property, feeling, at the same time, assured that he would be a more willing instrument in his hands after that act than

otherwise. On returning home he found, as he expected, that Green, on the strength of his newly-acquired fortune, had dipped very deep in fresh speculations, and that, were he to make restitution to his nephew, he would be brought to bankruptcy. He therefore fell, though at first reluctant, into the nefarious scheme. It was fortunate for both that they had to deal with such a generous character as Douglas, who, while he allowed Gatherall to escape, gave his uncle his own time to repay the sums which he had buried in railway stock, pledging his word, likewise, that the whole history would be kept private by him; assuring his uncle, however, that he did so entirely out of love for his daughter, whom he desired might never know anything more of the subject than was given to the world—which was, that a will in his favour had been unexpectedly discovered.

With this arrangement Douglas and Heigarth retired along with Swipes, who accompanied them to their lodgings, where they found Flummery anxiously waiting the news. Mrs. Thrifty was exhorted to prepare one of her best dinners. Never, perhaps, did a happier party sit down to table; and when all risk in the cooking department was over, the joyful intelligence was given to the worthy landlady, who went half mad with delight, mixed a tumbler of toddy to drink the health of her best boarder, and then rushed out to spread the glorious tidings amongst the neighbours.

It may well be conceived that Douglas was no longer prohibited from visiting his cousin. At first he found Mr. Green shy and embarrassed; but no long time was necessary to place his uncle at ease. His was not the spirit to feel acutely the extent of the wrong he had committed, or to recoil from the man he had so basely attempted to injure. As for Rachel, her happiness knew no bounds, for every obstacle to a union with Douglas was now removed.

But we must draw to a close. In the course of a month or two Douglas and Heigarth took their degrees with honour, and a few days afterwards the former was united to Rachel Green. Heigarth went into the army as a surgeon. Swipes was established in business, and is prospering wonderfully, having given up his old habits with his old companions.

Verdant Flummery received his license to preach the Gospel, and, at the same period, an appointment to a church in Canada. Thither he went, accompanied by Agnes Cowper as his wife, and now astonishes the backwoodsmen by interlarding his discourses with scraps of German mysticism. Nevertheless, he is much esteemed, and accounted a good, sound divine. Gatherall and Son still pursue their venal path. Their credit, however, is now much shaken, in consequence of recent severe losses through over-speculation.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chapter XXVII.

When Van Diest recovered from his first alarm, and his fluttering nerves permitted him to attend to outward sounds, he became aware that those from whom he fled were ascending the stairs, apparently with the intention of searching the second floor. The bustle consequent upon their first operations reminded him of the urgency of flight before the visitation was extended to the attics wherein he had sought refuge. His attempt at concealment would, he knew, compromise him far more deeply than if he had been found in company with the guilty. Escape was now no longer a mere measure of precaution—it was necessary for his safety; but this state of the case did not facilitate his object.

The stairs were in possession of the enemy; and other issue there was none: even Van Diest, ever so prompt at expedients, found himself at a loss how next to proceed. He scarce dared to walk across the room, lest his heavy tread should betray his presence to those below; and yet he was loth to trust altogether to the chance of remaining undiscovered. The narrow limits of the chamber, and its denuded walls, offered no means of concealment, especially to one so substantial as Meinherr van Diest. The moment was, as he afterwards declared, the most critical of his hitherto unruffled existence.

Whilst still lost in hesitation, renewed sounds of ascending footsteps quickened his movements, and gave stimulus to his inventive genius. Fortunately for him, a small window protruding out upon the roof caught, at this instant, his eye and his attention; and cautiously opening it, he looked out to discover what chance of escape it might afford. From this casement the roof slanted downwards towards a stone gutter of great solidity, admitting of tolerably sure footing.

As Van Diest was speculating upon the probability of this water-course communicating with those of other houses, voices became loud in the passage. He heard, distinctly, Chievosa assuring some one that these were but the chambers of the domestics, and a gruff voice replying that it might have been recently converted to very different uses—might actually be the treasury of the house—such things had been seen; it might, moreover, conceal some suspicious things or persons. Van Diest waited not for further warning, but bolted at once, right manfully, through the window.

No sooner did he gain safe footing, than, clinging to the tilings, he shuffled along in the direction in which his face happened to be turned, with a nimbleness which did great credit to the steadiness of his head, and seemed to excite no small attention in a pair of watchful cats, the only visible witnesses of his exploit, who, jealous of his invading their hitherto respected domains, followed him with suspicious eyes until he reached the angle of the house. Here large chimney-stacks, which he succeeded in turning, intervened in such a manner as to shield him from the view of any one who might think it necessary to look from one of

the many projecting windows beneath which he had passed. He now conceived his retreat sufficiently covered to allow of his pausing to take breath, and to consider what was next to be done.

To await the departure of the hunters, and then back to cover, seemed reasonable enough; but then, the house might be watched, or closed, and an ill-timed return frustrate the advantage he had gained at such imminent risk and discomfort. The first and best thing was, certainly, to examine carefully the place where he stood, and the ways and means it might afford of extricating himself from his perilous and most novel situation.

The sight upon which Van Diest cast his eyes was, in reality, not without its own peculiar poetry, though it is doubtful if he was in any way conscious of its charm at that moment. The moon, which had been hitherto eclipsed by drifting clouds, gradually emancipating herself from her fleecy veils, shed a flood of light on the fair city, revealing, in all their varied outlines, gable, projection, tower, flanking turret, and other fanciful decorations which the architectural taste of that day sanctioned, adding a fantastic grace to all objects whether she silvered or shadowed them. Each roof rivalled its neighbour in the various ornaments that surmounted its chimneys. Here a crane turned its long neck to every wind; there a swan, or serpent, performed the same office. The dwellings of the more pious were distinguished by tall, stiff, wooden figures of the Virgin with the Holy Infant, that rose above their gables stately and cold, catching the silver light upon their grey garbs; some by the patron saints of the family, which were expected, like faithful sentinels, to ward off danger; others, careless of the vicinity of holier symbols, displayed lions, dogs, and every variety of the brute tribe. Sacred and profane, the moon cast her radiance on all alike; and these everywhere repeated figures gave a strangely animated appearance to the roofs, of which our modern stiff square chimneys and unadorned tilings can convey no idea.

Lights now began to glimmer in the region beneath, and added life to the scene. The mode of lighting the streets in those days, though imperfect, was not without a pleasing effect. Above the door of every house, however mean its description, hung a large lantern, whilst in front of the dwellings of greater note flared long rows of torches fixed in stone sockets. From the unquiet city, where the hum of men proclaimed that the bustle and activity of day had not yet subsided, the tapering, dentelated tower of our Lady's Church rose into the clear skies above, like the guardian spirit of the town, rooted in its soil, yet soaring far above its petty, vexed, and fretful habitations.

But whatever charm this prospect might have possessed for a contemplative spirit, enjoying it from a less precarious *point de vue*, truth compels us to state that our friend Van Diest was not even conscious of its existence, as he scanned with an anxious eye the depth beneath.

Not many yards from him a neighbouring roof sloped down towards, and joined, the gutter he was upon, forming a sort of lane along which his progress would be no longer difficult or dangerous. This he soon perceived, and determined to avail himself of it. The whole difficulty lay in reaching the nearest point of contact; moving forward, however, with the greatest precaution, he soon achieved it, when he breathed more freely. But the channel and the relief it afforded soon came to an

end, the gable front offering no further means by which to continue his perambulations. His only hope now rested in finding one of the attics open, through which he resolved, unhesitatingly, to seek a passage to the street, be the owner who he might.

It was not without some difficulty that, by the help of the moonlight, he discovered one small casement to be ajar; it gave access to a species of loft, from which Van Diest thought it would be an easy matter to descend into the house, and liberate himself, at once, from his unpleasant situation; but here a fresh check awaited him—the door was locked.

The intruder paused awhile, and looked around. The light of the moon streaming in permitted him to become aware of the forlorn look of the place, which bore traces of having been but lately cleared of all it usually contained; he listened attentively, but not a sound was heard within.

He first knocked softly at the door, hoping to attract the attention of some of the domestics who might be sleeping near; but the silence continued absolute. He next rattled the old crazy door in a manner which it was not able to resist; the lock gave way, and Van Diest, encouraged by the absence of all sound, pushed his discoveries further. He groped his way down stairs, and about the house, in the dark, and after no small waste of time and trouble, and almost as much risk to his neck as on the roofs where, at least, there was moonlight to guide him, he found it was labour lost; his first misgivings were correct, the house was untenanted; the family had, doubtless, like so many others in the neighbourhood, migrated to England. Every door was fastened, and more solid than that of the loft; each and all in turn defied his most strenuous efforts to force it. Nothing now remained but to remount to the only accessible apartment in the deserted dwelling, the empty wareroom. Upon examining this place more narrowly, he perceived, besides the casement through which he had effected his entrance, two others looking out upon the opposite tilings; there was no other alternative, and Van Diest, availing himself of one of them, disconsolately took once more to the roofs.

Now resting when he came to a commodious spot for so doing, and now aiding himself by means of chimney-stacks and other projections, running up one watercourse and down another, he managed, although with great exertion and at no small peril, to scramble from house-top to house-top. He lost all clue to localities, and familiar objects seen from such an unusual height appeared strange and new; all the casements he passed were lined with shutters, so solid as to defeat his several attemps at forcing them, and his courage and patience well-nigh deserted him.

But hope at last revived on perceiving, as he once more rounded a point, a light glimmering near the open window of a small attic chamber; and stealing cautiously towards it, he saw an old woman kneeling at prayers before the image of a favourite saint nailed to the wall.

"Piety," thought Van Diest, "argues kindness,—this decent woman will doubtless help me out of all my difficulties;" and, reassured by this notion, he stumbled into the chamber. The noise startled the devotee; she rose to her feet, and stood for a moment aghast with terror; before, however, her unexpected visitor could explain or speak a word, she

uttered shriek upon shriek, intermingling them with wild, confused objurgations.

"Avaunt thee, Sathanas! Think not thou hast power over a Christian woman in her old age, on account of the few peccadilloes of her youth. Avaunt thee! I say, or, by the Holy Cross, I'll throw holy water on thee to burn thee!"

"For God's sake," began Van Diest——

"Nay—nay, thou canst not move me," continued the old woman, venting every now and then a vigorous scream, whilst she gradually sidled towards the door. "It is true I have but lately stolen some pieces of fine linen from my master—that I have carried letters from his wife to the gay young Spaniard—but what of that? I have confessed, and was absolved no later than yesterday, and thou hast no power upon me. I can bring in our Master Thyssen, who is far more lawful prey than I. I shut my ears to thee," continued the deaf old woman, whilst Van Diest in vain endeavoured to bawl some inkling of the truth into her dull organs,—"I defy thee!—and may St. Anthony strangle thee!" she concluded, triumphantly, as she reached the door, and fled through it screaming like a scared curlew.

The name of her master, accidentally pronounced by the old woman in her rhapsody, caused Van Diest to beat a timely retreat. Thyssen was suspected of being one of the warmest adherents to the inquisition: and being, moreover, in office, he was rather a dangerous individual to trust in circumstances so critical.

Van Diest was now in luck for open windows; he passed several, but avoided them as belonging to Thyssen's tenement. At one of these he heard a whisper, the purport of which caused him to move forward, blessing the deep shade that at that peculiar spot prevented his being discovered.

"A figure stealing along the roof!" replied another voice. "Shoot him to be sure, like a troublesome cat: hand me my haquebut."

These inhospitable words quickened the current of Van Diest's blood and his steps at the same time. A few paces brought him near the other end of the roof, when he became aware that an obstacle stood in his way. He endeavoured to discover with his hands what the obscurity prevented him from seeing; when the next instant all doubt was removed, by a deep voice, speaking with a marked Spanish accent, words of no gentle inquiry:

"What do you here on these tiles?"

"Methinks I might return the question," replied Van Diest, endeavouring to free himself from the stranger's rude grasp.

"I have a right to be here," retorted the other, fiercely grappling with his unseen opponent.

"So have the cats," observed Van Diest, composedly; "and if we go on tugging at each other much longer, we may well hap to close our discussion after the same fashion as they so often do, namely, by rolling off the roofs into the street and breaking our necks."

Either struck by the truth of the remark, or the pacific tone in which it was spoken, the Spaniard released his hold, but continued to stand in a menacing attitude. They were close to one of the open windows that had tempted Van Diest to venture in this direction, and the voice of a

female ensconced within it was now heard addressing her companion. She spoke Spanish, and Van Diest now remembered that Thyssen had married a lady of that country. Before he could clear himself from this dilemma, the deep tones of the former speaker—he of the haquebut—no less a personage, doubtless, than the injured husband, were heard issuing from the casement whence the lady had but just spoken.

"Halt!" said he, in a voice so little encouraging that the other adversary of Van Diest, giving up, without further struggle, the contest for a position which promised now to be rather one of discomfort than of pleasure, made a precipitate retreat. Van Diest had not time to imitate his example; for the vindictive householder—who was also by this time between the roofs—seized the unwelcome night visitor as tightly behind as the jealous lover had, but a few minutes previously, held him in front.

"You unworthy seducer of all women that are unlucky enough to throw their eyes on you," said, in a broad Flemish accent, this new opponent, endeavouring to haul Van Diest through the window; but tug as he would, the heavy frame of the latter resisted his utmost efforts. "Yes, yes," he continued, in reply to the few words which the perplexed and despairing burgher found breath to utter. "I am not mistaken now, nor am I ever to be blinded again, you love-sighing, song-singing, wh—e-making, d—nedest scoundrel that ever walked the earth!"

"But, good meinherr," pleaded the guileless Van Diest.

"Good me no good! I'll give you a lesson you'll not forget in a hurry, you *tausend sacrament* rascal! You'll see by-and-by, in spite of your braveries and your trim moustachios, what you'll come to! You have broken the rest of all my household, though my wife swears you have done nothing more. For the last few weeks there has been no sleeping for an honest burgher who goes to bed betimes, that he may be early at church in the morning! Your moonlight caterwaulings are enough to drive one mad! I'll tell you what, master fair face and false heart, whiskers and flummery, if I were to treat you as you deserve, I'd fling you off these tiles, and let you find your way home as best you could, having helped you to the street!"

"Oh! my Juanito," whispered a soft voice not far off.

But Van Diest, getting wrathful as well as frightened, now plunged and kicked with a vigorous determination that soon brought him and the injured husband to the very end of the gutter. His last struggle effectually delivered him from the grasp of his irritated aggressor, but it was only to be precipitated into space.

Happily for Van Diest, his descent was not far, although he lay some minutes stunned on the wooden floor of the gallery into which he had fallen. When he recovered his senses, Thyssen was still anxiously gazing through the obscurity, from the edge whence Van Diest had rolled, and when he heard the deep gasped ejaculation, "*Sancta Maria!*" which announced that life was not extinct, and became aware that the prostrate burgher was endeavouring to rise, he muttered an audible "God be praised!" Van Diest would have entered into further explanations, being now at a safe distance from his late antagonist, but that individual was no longer within ear-shot.

With aching head and bruised limbs, Van Diest continued slowly his hopeless peregrination, determined, if nothing better offered itself, to

remain in the gallery till daybreak. He was, indeed, about to compose himself in an easy attitude of repose, when, suddenly, hope revived at the sight of a light streaming from the window of a small turret projecting from the corner of a neighbouring house, and overhanging the wooden balcony on which he stood.

It seemed the easiest thing imaginable to step into the turret-chamber, the casement being open, and though somewhat narrow, offering a reasonable aperture. Van Diest, however, reconnoitred closely before venturing on so bold an experiment, for the events of the night had rendered him a thought timid.

He could distinguish the smallest object within the closet, for it scarce deserved another name. A couple of large, yellow wax tapers, burning in silver flambeaux, a heavy and beautifully-wrought silver flagon, and wine-cups of the same metal, standing invitingly together with some fruits, the choicest of the season, offered a contrast to the rough oaken table, uncovered even by the customary carpet-work, the bare walls, and a couple of wooden stools, which alone furnished the apartment, not a little puzzling to Van Diest; there was, besides, a curiously inlaid ivory inkstand, and the table was strewed with papers. Van Diest, also, observed that pieces of tapestry had been so adjusted as to cover the two other windows of the turret, which, however, were considerably smaller than that through which he was gazing. All this denoted life within, yet there was not a human being visible.

The burgher remained stationary for some time, to ascertain if no one would appear with whom he could hold parley. At length, being fairly tired out, he had nearly made up his mind to step boldly through the opening, when his further movements were arrested by the creaking of the small door, at which entered two men, lowering their heads as, one by one, they passed through the low, arched entrance.

The simple black robe of one, trimmed with fur, and his black velvet cap, bordered with sable, seemed to denote the ease of a man at home; whilst the short cloak of sylvan green, trimmed with deep lace of silver, and the plumed barret of his companion, bespoke a visitor.

To Van Diest neither were unknown. In him of the green cloak he recognised Count Henry of Brederode; and in the taller and older of the two, Anthony Bomberg. This person, after having run a successful military career in other lands, had, not long since, returned to his native city and the house of his fathers; but his stern features and military figure were easily remembered by those who had once had the opportunity of noting them.

It was easy to guess that some secret of importance, and, therefore, of dangerous tenor, was about to be agitated between these two bold, factious men; and common prudence should have inspired Van Diest with the salutary notion of a speedy retreat; but the ruling passion of his life, the weakness that stained an otherwise estimable character, swayed him irresistibly, and though conscious of the danger and the unjustifiableness of the deed, though he had but so recently been discovered in a similar predicament, and had thought himself fortunate in escaping at so cheap a rate, yet he could not resist the impulse of nature, stronger than reason, and with lengthened neck, and eager eye and ear, he listened intently.

Neither of the gentlemen cast a glance at the window, but approaching the table, hastily took their seats, and Bomberg made the honours of the delicacies that lay there, in an unceremonious, though not uncourteous manner.

This trifling preliminary convinced Van Diest that his first suppositions were correct—that Bomberg was at home and that Brederode was his guest. The wine-cups were filled, and each bowed gravely to the other before raising them from the table.

"I drink," said Bomberg, as he put his goblet to his lips, "success to this night's conference, my lord, and thank you for your condescension in thus honouring my poor house."

"Nay, for that matter, you owe me but small thanks," said Count Henry, carelessly. "There are too many open ears at the Groote Gasthuys for such converse as we must hold together this night. Here, at least, we may be pretty secure of not being overheard."—Van Diest drew in his breath hard.—"But you have been already at work, I see," continued Brederode, pointing to the scattered papers before them.

"I have been hastily drawing up some forms of application to the French Protestant princes and leaders, as you desired. They are ready for your approval. I have addressed each party differently, as you will perceive—urging each with the motives that are most likely to have weight with him, and which my knowledge of their individual characters renders an easy matter to me. I am sorry that my long absence from home prevents my making myself as useful here."

"Each of us has his uses," said Brederode. "We have honest burghers and merchants, like that rare fellow, Paul van Meeren, to lend us money, and treat with the more zealous and headstrong of our persuasion, men whose hearts are iron and whose hands are of gold. We have wild and daring scapegraces, ready to brave danger for danger's sake, like the brothers Van der Noot, of Brussels; needful tools in a conspiracy; useful in arresting and cleaning out a messenger, easing him of his packets, and other small matters that might not suit the overscrupulous. Then, have we blindly-devoted, lion-hearted beings, such as Louis of Nassau, of whom we reckon many in our ranks, though their names be not so illustrious. But what we may chiefly pride ourselves upon, as the most necessary and efficacious of all powers in case matters come to the worse, is the possession of experienced captains to guide our valour—men whose voices have been heard on the battle-field; who have led soldiers to face the enemy of their creed; who are familiar with the details of a party war. Such a one, I am happy to say, we possess in Captain Anthony Bomberg."

The veteran smiled grimly, and gave his moustachio a fiercer twist at this well-turned and graciously received compliment.

"Certainly," said he, "a man who has fought under the banner of a Condé, and by the side of a Schwendi, cannot be supposed to be ignorant of the art of war. It were a false modesty—unworthy of a man to admit such a thing. And all who have known Bomberg throughout his long, and not inglorious career, must own that no other motive but that of defending an oppressed and pure religion against its bigoted persecutors, ever swayed his arm. I come back, my lord, as poor as I went, and my claims on the world's favour are but few. I am a zealous Protestant—a bold soldier. The first from the choice of my reason, the

latter from the instinct of my nature. But I know nothing, and care for nothing in this world, beyond my Bible and my sword."

"Blades thus firmly tempered are inestimable in the impending crisis," said Brederode. "Such a one, too, shall we find in the Lord of Thoulouse; and I know little of the consequences of oppression, if it nerve not every arm to resist—if it make not of every Fleming a hero. But to return to these matters in France. You have served long in the religious wars of that country?"

"Your pardon, my lord," said Bomberg, "but you mentioned not the Prince of Orange among your allies; yet I was led to think——"

"True; I forgot him," replied Brederode, with a smile.

"Were you, then, sir count, merely casting up the sum of your tools, and not that of your fellow-labourers in a great cause?" demanded the old soldier, in a tone that startled the more courtly Brederode, and caused him to draw his chair further from the irritated hero.

"Pacify yourself, my good sir; no harm was meant," replied Brederode, with a smile, though his first feeling had been one of haughty surprise, which he had trouble to suppress—for Brederode, though imperatively taught by his duties and necessities, as a chief of party, the art of conciliation, was endowed by nature with a violent arrogance of temper which it was at all times difficult and sometimes impossible for him to conceal.

"Why, then, have you not named the wise William of Nassau, and the great Egmont?"

"Simply," replied Brederode, "because the *great*, as you call him, is not yet ours; and the wise is but a secret friend, which, I think, is much the same thing as being none."

"Then why say, and print publicly, that they have already strengthened our party?"

"You a captain, my worthy friend, and not know the value of false colours and stratagems? Do you not see that what has been once received as an accomplished fact, is likely from the very strength of that circumstance to become one? Then the Prince of Orange is not altogether idle. He keeps regiments of spies abroad, as does Madame de Parme, and these legions of black spirits who swarm the land, have helped both parties to fight out the battle, until now, on pretty fair ground without the spilling of blood."

"Well, stratagems and scouts are necessary in war, though when I catch one belonging to the enemy——"

The menacing speech of the austere soldier was here suddenly interrupted, for his eye at that instant rested on a man's head and shoulders boldly protruding into the apartment through the open casement, and evidently, by the eager and peculiarly knowing expression of the broad physiognomy, completely absorbed in the act of listening.

"There stands one of the night birds you were speaking of, my lord count; but whether the property of friend or foe, I leave you to decide;" and he coolly pointed out the culprit to his companion's attention.

The more hasty Brederode rose; and, darting at the offender, grasped him tightly by the ruff, and inquired, with a voice of thunder, "What he was doing there?"

"Listening," said Van Diest, meekly.

"Listening! you bold varlet—prying into our secrets!"

"Don't keep him so long at the window," said Bomberg; "bring him in—we can, then, despatch him at our leisure."

"Not so quick, my valiant captain. We are not here in a French camp, but in a quiet peaceful city; and Our Lady forgive me, I think this man bears a Flemish tongue in his head, for all that his action be so reprehensible. Step in, fellow," continued the count, imperatively; "let us hear all about you."

Brederode had no need of repeating his order, for at the very first invitation the trembling Van Diest jumped into the room.

"I will tell the truth, and nothing but the truth," exclaimed he; "but, for the Virgin's sake, harm me not, my lords. I am no spy, I assure you!"

"You are an eavesdropper, at least, sirrah!" said Bomberg, sternly. "For whom, or for what purpose were you listening to what concerns you not?"

"For my own pleasure," timidly put in Van Diest.

"Pshaw!" said the soldier, with a shrug expressive of the utmost disbelief; "I'm not to be trifled with!"

"Well, I am half tempted to believe him," said Brederode, who had been scanning the person and countenance of Van Diest, with a look that lost more and more of its severity as it became prolonged. "Come, Sir Curiosity, give a true account of yourself, and speak out like a man."

Van Diest now entered into a detail of his night's adventure, which, from having been tolerably concise at first, became gradually elongated, as the narrator warmed with his subject and was less influenced by fear, until he fell back into his natural circumlocutory style.

Bomberg, more than once, lost patience, but Brederode, on the contrary, became deeply interested in that part of the narrative which referred to the inquisitorial visit at Master Cornelius van Meeren's; for Van Diest prudently avoided any mention of his visit to Brussels, and what he had there seen of Chievosa. When, however, he came to his own adventures of that night, and told how he had been first taken for his Satanic Majesty by an aged crone, next, by a young frail one, for a gay gallant, he made such an impression upon his listeners, that when he came to the point where two grave conspirators mistook him for a spy, Brederode laughed outright; and even Bomberg's grisly moustachio seemed to curl with a passing smile.

Luckily for Van Diest, he had the less difficulty in convincing his auditors of his identity, that his brother was personally known to both gentlemen; and there was an undeniable family resemblance between the two old bachelors.

"The moral of this story is twofold," said Bomberg, turning to Brederode. "One lesson which I shall reap from it is never again to seek secrecy in an abandoned turret. I shall remember that others besides cats may be taking pleasure-trips by the light of the moon, on the adjacent roofs and balconies; and you, master long ears, should remember in future that listening to other men's secrets may cost honest burghers their ears. You are happy to have found a friend in the count, or I should have put myself to the trouble of slitting yours with my own hands."

"It might have put you to some inconvenience," replied Van Diest,

in his usual unruffled manner. "We of the Netherlands are a peaceful race; but, when attacked, we can sell our lives as dearly as other men."

"There spoke the spirit of a countryman," said Brederode; "and for the sake of that claim much must be forgiven. Warned by experience, I trust Master van Diest will not err thus again. Besides, we must remember that he *fell* into temptation, and did not seek it. But you were saying, sir captain, the lesson of this night was twofold; I should be more inclined to esteem it threefold. What think you of an inoffensive burgher being thus torn from his home in the very teeth of the regent's promises? Methinks it is a positive slight and derision to ourselves, and an infringement of her pledged word—a deceiving of our trust, is it not?"

"Woman's ways and woman's wiles," said Bomberg—"we have had enough of them, with that arch spirit of evil, Catherine de Medici. I know but one way of untying knots of crafty policy, whether of prince or princess—and that's with the sword."

"It must come to that in the end," said Brederode, thoughtfully; "but we are prepared. This circumstance is rather favourable than otherwise to our views—but I forget, we are not alone. We need not exact any oath of secrecy from honest Master van Diest, a promise of silence will be all that is necessary. He must be fully aware, in spite of the neutral sentiments he professes, that to seek to discredit our cause would be neither a handsome nor a safe proceeding."

The worthy man was then dismissed, with courtesy and kindness, by Brederode, but Bomberg, who led him down stairs to the house-door, before opening it, launched out into a severe reprimand for that night's transgression, and uttered threats of condign punishment in case of its ever being repeated. He had, out of respect to Brederode, restrained himself in his presence; but he now gave way to his wrath with the better grace that the restriction had not cost him little.

Van Diest thought he had never known what the pleasure of walking a street might be, before he had experienced the inconvenience of a promenade on the roofs. He hurried home, and, without inquiring after the fate of Cornelia, or even listening to the well-deserved lecture of his housekeeper upon the enormity of coming home so late, hastened to his chamber, to commune with himself. His reflections, doubtless, partook of the cheerful, hopeful tone of his constitution; for he soon fell asleep, in spite of the many threatening clouds that were beginning to gather around his hitherto calm horizon.

WAS JULIUS CÆSAR A DANDY?

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

Chapter I.

Imaginez-vous voir un homme fait à plaisir, un de ces héros de roman qui n'avaient qu'à se monstrer pour causer des insomnies aux princesses. Ajoutons à cela que la nature, qui mêle ordinairement ses dons, l'avait doué de beaucoup d'esprit et de valeur: c'était un cavalier parfait.—Gil Blas.

It needs no ghost to come from the grave to inform us that Julius Cæsar was a scholar, a soldier, and a patriot; that, like Moses, he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians—that, like Alexander, he was courageous to the very verge of rashness—that, like Marcus Curtius, he was patriotic even unto death. But was he also a dandy? a *petit-maître?* an exquisite? a lady-killer? Was he at charges for a looking-glass? Did he entertain some score or two of tailors? Could he caper as nimbly in a lady's chamber as he could fight in the fields of Spain and Gaul? And, lastly, could he swear with *Touchstone* that he had been a courtier—that he had trod a measure—flattered a lady—been politic with his friend—smooth with his enemy? *Questions graves—mais*, are they unanswerable? *Nous verrons*. Dare I proceed? Do I not cower beneath the flight of recondite daws, now soaring in the seventh heaven of transcendentalism? who would descend at one fell swoop to peck at the poor little heart I thus wear upon my sleeve, if I should fail to demonstrate, most irrefragably, that the erudite author of the "Commentaries" *par excellence* was equally profound in penning a *billet-doux;* and that he who so dauntlessly leaped off the pier at Phar, swimming with one hand and holding his precious books in the other, would all as fearlessly have crossed the Hellespont to convey a sonnet on Hero's eyebrow in the same state of preservation; that, in fact, he could *filer le par fait amour*, and boast in the boudoir, as well as of his easy conquest over Pharnaces at the battle of Zela, "*Veni, vidi, vici!*" In this opinion I am happily borne out by the most impartial of historians, Hooke, who thus observes: "It seems to be agreed that he was what is called a man of pleasure, and was much in favour with the women." And again the same veracious writer remarks, a few pages further on, "Hitherto all that we have learnt of Cæsar is, that he was of the first class of the nobles, a rake in early years, and a spendthrift, but remarkably brave and intrepid, magnanimous, polite, eloquent, generous, and liberal even to profusion." What requisites to charm and captivate! Who could resist the brave, the generous, and the open-hearted?

To these mental qualifications there is every reason to believe that he added all the advantages of art and elegance; the luxury and extravagance of the age in which he lived being proverbial; nothing in the known world exceeding the prodigality of the Romans, both as regards dress, and also in their immoderate use of the most expensive perfumes; for, in their Thermæ, or baths, we find that a room, called the *Unctuarium*, was ap-

propriated to the anointing of the bathers; and here, previously to their entering the baths, they made use of a cheap and coarse oil for the purpose; but, on returning from their ablutions, they employed fine odoriferous ointments, which were abundantly supplied, and with which they carefully anointed their bodies. Balsams, oils, and unguents of the most costly descriptions were arranged round the apartment, in pots and vases, containing extract of violet, cinnamon, orange-flower, mint, balm, pounded ambergris, musk, frankincense, myrrh, and, more choice still, *unguentum irinum*, oil made from the iris, and a variety of others equally choice and fragrant, with which they lubricated their eyebrows, hair, neck, head, and arms.

It is not likely, therefore, that *un homme si distingué* neglected any of the means and appliances then in vogue to assist him in his numerous *affaires du cœur*. Indeed, mention is frequently made of Cæsar's nicety in that respect; *par example:* Cicero saw a young man reeling home one morning from a drunken debauch, as he was going to the forum; he staggered against one of his attendants, and slightly scratching his essenced locks with his fore-finger, hiccuped an apology. "Ah! that young spark will dishonour his forefathers," observed Cicero; "he will never come to good." It was Cæsar. Cicero again alludes to the beautiful arrangement of his hair, when, as quaintly narrates Plutarch, "Therefore, Cicero, like a wise shipmaster that feareth the calmness of the sea, was the first man that, mistrusting his manner of dealing in the commonwealth, found out his craft and malice, which he cunningly cloaked under the habit of outward courtesy and familiarity. And yet," said he, "when I consider how finely he combeth his faire bush of haire, and how smooth it lyeth, and that I see him scratch his head with one finger only, my mind gives me then, that such a kind of man should not have so wicked a thought in his head as to overthrow the state of the commonwealth."

"Unico digitulo scalpit caput"—scratching the head with a single finger—was learnt by the Romans from the young fops of Greece, after their conquest of that country, and hence adopted by Cæsar. But it was not alone by his personal appearance that he aimed to fascinate; he studied to excel in all that was manly and commanding. "He was," says Plutarch, "so excellent a rider of horse from his youth, that, holding his hands behind him, he would gallop his horse upon the spur." He also received lessons in eloquence from the celebrated Apollonius Molo, of Rhodes, the rhetorician, under whom Cicero had improved his talents; he even condescended to write verses; and was quite *au fait* in all the arts which please and win the female heart. That he was a devoted admirer of the fair sex is universally admitted. That he idolised women for their grace and beauty, and venerated them for their chastity and goodness, is sufficiently proved by his marriages with three of the most distinguished ladies of Rome—Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, Pompeia, the daughter of Pompey the Great, and Calphurnia, the daughter of Piso; by his splendid funeral orations over his aunt Julia, the widow of Marius, and his own most regretted wife, Cornelia.

That he had, too, a just and dignified appreciation of a husband's honour is incontestably evinced by his divorcement of Pompeia, who, as the wife of Cæsar, *ought* not to be suspected of infidelity. That he

could disarm even the envious and malignant, and forgive that which it is most trying to submit to—*ridicule*, is clearly shown in his conduct to Catullus, who, having lampooned him in the most sarcastic manner, was invited to supper by Cæsar, and treated so generously, that he converted the satirical poet into a firm and enduring friend. That, alas! availing himself of the immunity afforded to vice in an exceedingly licentious age, he deemed it no derogation of character, no prostitution of some of the very highest endowments of man, to expend a princely patrimony in riotous living, and to employ his almost godlike talents to subvert and betray those, but too easily dazzled and seduced by such apparent superiority of intellect and munificence of behaviour, is also but too evident, from the details handed down of his triumphs and successes in libertinism. Yet, had he considered his conduct as criminal, as it appears to us, he would doubtless have been as eager to reform as we are to censure; for the really exalted mind revolts at the meanness of guilt, and recoils at the ignobleness of turpitude; and the idea of baseness is as abhorrent to, as it is incompatible with, a true love of the heroic and daring.

He, who could sigh at beholding a statue of Alexander, and reproach himself with having accomplished nought grand and glorious at an age at which the Macedonian hero had subdued the greater part of the world—he, who could console himself for the loss of the fine estates which he had lavished amongst his friends, with the thought that Hope yet remained to him—he, who could never yield to inactivity whilst any important state affair demanded his attention, was not likely to forget himself by culpable indulgence or gross profligacy. No—all that can be laid to his serious charge on that score appears to be the fashionable errors of a gallantry which rather seemed to lend an *éclat* to valour than to dim its lustre, and which was tolerated amongst his class as the most venial of all trespasses; even so by the more strict and ascetic stoics themselves, as is observable from the unmoved manner in which Cato bore the discovery of his own sister Servilia's correspondence with Cæsar, absolutely sending a love-letter to him to the forum while Cato was engaged there in speaking of the Cataline conspiracy; and who, suspecting that it might be from one of the party concerned in it, conveying some secret information, insisted on its being read aloud by Cæsar, who, however, instead of complying with this absurd request, placed the letter, with a quiet smile, in Cato's hand, who, at a glance, perceiving who it was really from, returned it, pettishly exclaiming, "There, sot!" and instantly resumed his discourse.

This certainly appears an almost unparalleled mark of indifference and want of delicacy. Where was the outburst of fraternal indignation, naturally to be expected, at this utter violation of the duties of a sister, a wife, and a mother? No allusion is even made to Cato's mortified pride—Cato's anger and distress. As soon as he was satisfied that the letter in question did not militate against the state, he was content to submit to the infamous knowledge of a sister's shame and degradation; and even make a friend and colleague of the man who had wrought this disgrace.

It is always necessary for the writer of the most simple sketch touching on veritable history never to lose sight of the peculiarities and pri-

vileges of the period of which he treats, or he might startle the island from its propriety with a vengeance, by that which he depicts of a less civilised and moral people than we happily can boast ourselves to be; and seem, as it were, to offer a palliation for the excesses which he should and must condemn.

Chapter II.

Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm, when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity.

Moore's "*Lalla Rookh.*"

It was on his return from Utica, after having terminated a war of great importance, and attended with extreme difficulty, in little more than five months, that the senate resolved to testify their gratitude to Cæsar, by a succession of triumphs and honours more magnificent and costly than had ever before been awarded to any mortal, even in the splendid and pompous city of Rome.

It was decreed that there should be feasts and rejoicings for forty successive days to celebrate his late victory; that when he triumphed his chariot should be drawn by four white horses, as those of Jupiter and of the Sun; and that, besides the ordinary number of lictors belonging to his offices, he should be preceded by all those of his former dictatorships. He was created dictator for ten years, and inspector of morals for three; his statue was placed in the capitol, opposite to that of Jupiter, with the globe of the earth under his feet, and with this inscription—"To Cæsar, the demigod." But all these public demonstrations of approval and admiration did not satisfy the heart of the conqueror; did not fill the aching void of his soul; did not soothe to peace the restlessness of despair and anxiety, which disturbed its tranquillity, in the very midst of popular exultation. The idol of the people yet felt one sickening vacuum, one imperative desire, one yearning wish—one feverish pulse throbbed frequently and fearfully; and the veins of the laurel-wreathed brow grew large and swollen beneath the proud emblem of victory placed on it, by the potent will of a devoted and transported nation. Love distracted the mind of the hero, and rendered distasteful the empty pageant, which yet seemed worthy to crown the highest human ambition—the extremest of human supremacy.

What to him, at that moment, was the unanimous acclamations of that vast and excited multitude, when the one soft voice which was alone welcome to his ear was mute in the silence of disdain? What to him was the approbation of those countless eyes which followed his every movement, and, as they followed, adored and reverenced, when the sweet orbs for which he only existed turned resentfully from his, seeking the base earth to receive their precious tears, rather than shed them on the fond bosom, fainting with anguish, for the scorn and sorrow he was forbidden

either to appease or mitigate? Servilia and Cæsar had quarrelled. Servilia. the most dear to his memory, the most present to his thought—Servilia, for whom he had violated the innocent trust of a virtuous wife, and impoverished the fortune of his successors—Servilia, for whom it was no sacrifice to forget all, to give up all.

She had heard a vague report of his being subdued by the supplications of the fair young wife of one of the revolting citizens, and rewarding her entreaties by granting a free pardon to her husband; and too guilty herself to conceive that such clemency arose from aught save a criminal admiration of the interesting supplicant, she became jealous and indignant, and nourished the unfounded anger of her heart yet more by recalling to mind the real proofs of fickleness and infidelity of which she could accuse him. She knew but too well the inconstancy of his nature, and the latitude he allowed himself on all occasions when his taste was captivated or his imagination inflamed; and she also knew, alas, from her own oft-times secretly and deeply deplored deviation from rectitude, how irresistible was the homage of him whom all homaged; how elating the idea of having the mighty victor of fifty battles an humble suitor for one chary smile, one gentle word. She thought of his early love for Fulvia, his passion for Cleopatra, his more shameless intrigue with Mucia, and she felt mortified and disparaged that charms so surpassing, so matchless as hers were universally acknowledged to be, should be employed to fan the chilled and expiring embers of a worn and *blasé* heart. She considered herself outraged that Cæsar should, under any temptation, have forgotten his sworn allegiance to her, and surrender himself to the passing attractions of another; and she avoided, with the most pertinacious obstinacy, all explanation, all justification, and turned with sickening disgust from the reconciliation proffered so earnestly and so humbly; rejoiced to find that her implacability could mar the brightest hour of his triumphant prosperity, and cast a shadow over the refulgence of his noon of glory.

Were it not for these futile paroxysms of maddening jealousy, these torturing recurrences of doubt and mistrust, the career of the vicious would gilde on too smoothly, too serenely, to afford encouragement to the virtuous struggler on the tempestuous ocean of adversity, or furnish a moral to the uprightness which yet remains faithful to the duties to which it is pledged. But, like an incurable canker, these eat into the depraved heart, and rankle and fester there, to the destruction of peace here, or hope of peace hereafter.

Cæsar, a prey, too, to the most harassing disquietude, the most painful suspense, felt that he must be instantly reconciled to the imperious woman who so ungenerously, so tyrannically used her influence over him, or be, despite of grandeur, glory, pomp, and fame, utterly and irretrievably wretched. He felt that he must have one day, one whole day of exculpation and forgiveness with her—must give himself up uninterruptedly and unrestrainedly for twelve blissful hours to the enchantment of her witching thraldom, and be led captive in his turn. So, at the termination of the tedious and wearisome ceremonies, so brilliant, so gratifying to every individual who shared them, save him for whom they were expressly intended to delight, he resolved, as a means of obtaining the wished-for interview with Servilia, to dedicate his long-projected temple to Venus Pandemos,

making Servilia to understand that she was in reality the goddess whom he thus immortalised. Pleased with the flattering compliment, and won by his humility, she consented to accept the invitation which he had sent, "to grace with her presence the august scene, and by so doing secure to him a far greater triumph than any one of those just celebrated to his honour."

After her customary bath of asses' milk, and a copious application of the cosmetics at that time in such esteem, she repaired thither, accompanied by her favourite attendants, and looking quite as lovely as the ardent and impatient Cæsar had depicted her in his really lavishly embellishing imagination. Nay, animated by gratified vanity at this openly avowed oblation to her beauty, and glad of the opportunity thus, as it were, forced upon her by an almost imperial command to be friends once more with him whom she was beginning to sincerely regret having distressed, and, perhaps, somewhat estranged by her severity, without compromising her self-love by appearing to seek a reconciliation; her cheek wore a more vivid hue, her eye a more refulgent lustre, and her lip a more radiant smile than they were wont, even with one who was all artifice and dissimulation; and, determined to regain every atom of her old and dangerous empire over his too credulous and enamoured heart, she heightened all her personal charms by the most gentle and subdued demeanour, which to him, who had expected only either sullenness or indignation, was as surprising as it was delightful.

Reclining in the porch of the temple upon the sumptuous cushions so indispensable to Roman ease and luxury, and literally overshadowed by the profusion of rare exotics forming the temporary bowers, beneath which an elegant repast was arranged, and which, besides lending a grateful coolness to the fervid heat of a cloudless summer's day, also displayed that true patrician recklessness of expense which distinguished all the festivals of Rome,—Servilia, eager to listen to the honeyed justification which was to convince her that she still reigned paramount over the victorious, the redoubtable, the enslaved Cæsar, soon dismissed the fair dancing-girls of Egypt, the tender minstrels of Iberia, who had been exerting their graceful talents for her amusement and pleasure.

He, as he poured out the strong emotion of his impassioned soul, watched with intense interest and anxiety every variation of the changeful countenance on which his gaze was immovably fixed,—to read, by its expression, the fluctuations of the heart he was so desirous to completely tranquillise and charm. He marked the gradual dispersion of the mists of doubt yet obscuring the dawn of reawakening affection; and he awaited, with the utmost solicitude, until that beautiful face wore an aspect of perfect and entire serenity; then, when he saw that Servilia's confidence in his protestations was quite restored, as a recompense for her gracious forgiveness he drew from out the ample folds of his robe a small curiously carved golden casket, and calling her immediate attention to the action, opened it carefully, and revealed to her dazzled and delighted eyes a pearl for which he had paid the enormous sum of fifty thousand pounds, and which, without a moment's hesitation,* he placed on her beautiful bosom.

* Suetonius.

Alas, for the frailty of woman! that dumb jewel had more weight in advocating his cause than all the flow of his most pleading eloquence; and kissing the noble brow, whose partial baldness he had so gloriously covered with laurels, she protested that no latent suspicions should ever again mar the felicity which she confessed she alone derived from his generous and devoted attachment, the continuance of which would ensure her happiness for ever.

Little did he think, as he laid his unsuspecting head in the lap of loveliness, and resigned himself to the dreamy rapture of that intoxicating hour, that the fair creature then bending over him so tenderly and so timidly, would, in the space of a few short years, lend an unappalled ear to the suggestions of his assassins, aid their plans for his murder, and, from the very spot with which his prodigal infatuation had so richly endowed her, calmly see the base conspirators issue forth to strike that astounding blow that filled all Rome with amazement and horror! Little did he think, whilst listening to her* siren voice, whilst receiving her false and flattering caresses, that the idolised bosom which he had just adorned would, at no distant period, actually foster the serpent to strength and vigour whose envenomed sting was to wound him unto death!—little did he think, as he bowed his neck to the yoke of the enchaining arms now encircling him, that, ere long, the arm of her very son would be stretched forth, in all the fury of blind enthusiasm, to smite the proud victor, the *supposed* tyrant to the earth!—little did he think, whilst gazing in those soft, earnest eyes, that, almost before the brightness of their gleam had departed from his soul, his own would be darkened by the mantle which he should draw over them in the hurry of terrified despair, to shut out the awful sight of the incensed—the beloved—the ungrateful Brutus, whose upraised sword was about to pierce his benefactor—his saviour—as if, in beholding such unheard-of treachery, he had indeed seen enough of such a faithless world as this! But it is so throughout with the profligate and sinful, and in the case of Cæsar was no exception made; for, in the closing hour of his brief and brilliant existence, he felt, in all the poignancy of the bitterest self-accusation and remorse, that "the gods are *just*, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us." As is clearly shown in his passive non-resistance to the attack of the youth who, in thus imagining to serve his country, did, in fact, avenge a mother's dishonour.

* Cicero reckons it among the solecisms of the time that the mother of the tyrant-killer should hold the estate of one of her son's accomplices (the lands and villa of Pontius Aquila, one of the conspirators, bestowed on her by Julius Cæsar), and her having such a share in all the counsels of Brutus, made Cicero the less inclined to enter into them, or to be concerned with one whom he could not trust. "When he is influenced so much," he says, "by his mother's advice, or, at least, her entreaties, why should I interpose myself?"—HOOKE.

THE STAGE-STRUCK PEDAGOGUE.

BEING THE TENTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

He that gives his mind to observe, will meet with many things even in vulgar life worthy of observation.—Bacon.

The commercial-room of the principal hotel in the town of H——, was one of the best that I was in the habit of visiting during my journeyings in the South of England. Spacious, lofty, and well carpeted, its oak-panelled walls adorned with paintings and engravings, its handsome, massively-framed mirror, and its deep bay windows, with rich red curtains dight, presented to the eye at once a combination of comfort and elegance. Very possible is it, however, to be in very snug quarters, and yet be very dull. Alone, one winter's evening, this was unpleasantly exemplified in myself, whilst located in the quarters I have described, when, after a brief-lived, yellow, sickly sort of November day, night came on, and found me alone and unoccupied. I had finished my letters, spelled the town and country papers over and over again, inspected for the hundredth time the paintings on the wall, and then, drawing a chair up to the fire, sat to cogitate how I might best dispel the *ennui* which was fast creeping upon me, without books, without companionship, and the prospect of a long dreary evening before me. Whilst in this mood, it occurred to me that the theatre might possibly be open, and although my former visits to the place had given me anything but a favourable impression of the drama as there represented, it was with no little interest that I rang the bell to make the inquiry.

"Any performance to-night at the theatre, waiter?" I inquired, as that functionary entered.

"Yes, sir; and this is the new actor, Mr. Steerer's, first night."

[The real name of the *debutant* I suppress, as Steerer, for aught I know to the contrary, may still belong to the profession.]

"Mr. Who?" I again inquired, on hearing the waiter's words, endeavouring, though vainly, to recal the name to my recollection, even as that of a provincial star.

"Mr. Steerer, sir," he returned; "he is a schoolmaster, and never acted before, and to-night makes his first appearance; but indeed I think they are only gammoning him. Here, sir, is a bill of the play!"

I hastily ran my eye over it, and perceived that the first piece announced for representation was "Charles the Second, or the Merry Monarch;" the part of *Rochester* by Mr. Steerer, his first appearance on any stage.

"A schoolmaster—gammoning him—first appearance,"—I mentally exclaimed, whilst recalling the waiter's words; "there is novelty, however, to recommend the entertainment;" and finding that the time announced for commencing the performance was near, I set out for that temple of the drama, whose frontage, in the town of H——, is ornamented with busts of Garrick and some of his most eminent contemporaries of the sock and buskin.

At this theatre, I was one night witness to a somewhat ludicrous circumstance, unconnected with the business of the stage, and which, as it now occurs to me—leaving the stage-struck pedagogue awhile—I will here relate.

A great star, from London, was to shine on the occasion to which I allude, for that night only. The house was crowded to an overflow. It was the height of summer, and very—very hot. Every available place was occupied, except one rather small box over the stage, the top of the tier, and which I believe was called the manager's. Soon after the performance had commenced, the attention of the audience was attracted to the box alluded to, by the appearance therein of a somewhat remarkable-looking personage. He wore mustachios, and a profusion of curls hung over his shoulders. His hands glittered with rings, whilst the also sparkling studded bosom of his shirt was crossed by a massive chain, from which was suspended a glittering mounted eye-glass.

The sensation which he created appeared to afford him not a little gratification. Seating himself in the most striking attitude which he could command, with his back to the stage, he raised his eye-glass, and commenced a deliberate survey of the audience, with an air as though their closely packed state in pit, boxes, and gallery, with their pipinghot faces, had been done expressly to elucidate some problem of what amount of heat and pressure their anatomies were capable of sustaining, and which, for his own gratification, he had come to solve; or, as though they had been a collection of some peculiar species of the animal world, so rammed and jammed together, as an exhibition for his especial amusement. He paid not the slightest attention to the performance on the stage, being evidently too much absorbed in his own, and the effect which he produced. He certainly drew more attention than the actors, and of this he seemed to be tolerably well aware, whilst occasionally lowering the glass from his eye, to run his fingers and his rings through his long and glossy locks. A more conceited, over-dressed, piece of human nature I had never seen. With little hesitation in my own mind, I estimated his flashy-looking jewellery as but instances of the genius of the "iron village," and himself to be either a master showman, a quack doctor, or one of those descendants of Israel, itinerant vendors of steel-penshs and penshil cases. Alas, for his vanity, his dignified solus was destined ere long to be interrupted;—interrupted, too, at a time when he, in all probability, was flattering himself that the audience to a man was regarding him as some foreign prince, at least; or some nobleman who, resting in H—— for the night, had patronised the legitimate drama by taking a box to himself.

To render intelligible that which follows, it may be well to mention here, that the box occupied by the mysterious dandy had been offered to me by the box-keeper, when, on my entering the theatre, from the crowded state of the house, there appeared to be but little chance of my obtaining a seat; and I had declined availing myself of the offer, when, in addition to its conspicuousness, as well as having a chandelier immediately beneath, which would render its vicinity none the cooler on that sweltering night, I learned that the entrance to it was by means of a ladder from behind the scenes. This will account for the intrusion on the dignified state of the glittering stranger, when at half-play some three or four plainly-dressed tradesmen of the town were ushered into the same box, presenting a striking contrast to the peacock-like appearance of the gen-

tleman with the flowing locks. The exquisite now found himself obliged, like other people, to compress his anatomy into a smaller compass, an inroad upon his dignity, which was, alas! shortly followed by a still greater. I have already observed, it was the height of summer, and that the theatre that night was as hot as an oven. That it was particularly so in the manager's box in its now crowded state, with the chandelier beneath, became pretty evident, by one of the new comers, soon after his entrance, divesting himself of his cravat, his companions soon following the example. I need scarcely say, that, although respectable, they were not the most polished of the tradesmen of H——, belonging to that class who affect, rather than otherwise, a saucy bluntness, what they call a rough and ready straightforwardness, who are particularly partial to things as they used to be, like to be thought upright and downright, and who are much given to use the questionable declaration, "There's no pride about me."

The reader will not be surprised, therefore, to learn that, without much hesitation, after divesting themselves of their cravats, finding the heat rather increasing than diminishing, the "uprights and downrights" took their coats off also. I never witnessed greater mortification of vanity, which the irritating closeness of the place must have considerably added to, than was now depicted in the countenance of the tightly-braced dandy. He rose from his seat as the curtain ascended for the "School for Scandal," which was played as an afterpiece, purposing, no doubt, to quit his quarters and companionship, with which he was, doubtless, highly disgusted.

The means of retreat, however, had evidently been cut off by the removal of the ladder, and from the place which I occupied, I could see the mustachied one standing at the side of the box where it communicated with the stage behind the wings, and the amazement of the audience may be conceived on hearing the following:

Lady Sneerwell.—"The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted."

Voice behind the scenes, in a rather suppressed tone, "I say I vhont de ladder."

Snake.—"They were, madam, and——"

Voice behind the scenes, in a louder key interrupting Snake, "I tell you I musht have de ladder, I vhont to come down."

Another voice. "Hush, sir, you are disturbing the audience, your conduct is most disgraceful, you must wait to the end of the act."

Whilst this brief dialogue had been carried on, Lady Sneerwell and Snake had paused and retired up the stage, as well they might, for every eye in the house was turned to the box of the caged exquisite. After this unsuccessful effort at emancipation, the jewelled one turned from the place of communication with the stage, and once more presented his frontispiece, now full of rage and perspiration, to the audience. Most heroically he seemed to struggle with the heat, but anger and mortification seemed to increase the fever of his blood; he was but human nature, and he was evidently roasting. What was to be done? See, he surveys the coatless ones beside him—the vulgar, the canaille—he pauses—for some moments is irresolute, but at last 'tis done,—his richly braided coat is off, —but oh lapse of memory, dreadful forgetfulness!—the murky hue of his shirt sleeves speaks too unmistakably of having but little connexion with

the snow-white, glittering studded dickey, so profusely displayed in front. Poor devil, he soon became conscious that the play was not—but that he was now the thing. Every eye was again turned upon him, titters were heard in the boxes, and very unmistakable laughter in the pit. His suffering approached the climax.

The gods singled him out for their especial attention, and roar followed roar, as succeeded each other their rude sallies of wit, in which allusions to Moshes, washerwomen, and price of soap were freely sprinkled. This occurred at the opening of the second scene, when the son of Israel, goaded to desperation, interrupted Sir Peter's soliloquy, by turning again to the entrance of the box, and shouting at the top of his voice for the ladder.

"Cot Almighty, I tell you, I shall be shuffocated," he almost screamed in rage and vexation. Sir Peter paused in his speech to become a spectator with the rest—the whole audience having risen to their feet—of the Jewish exquisite.

The ladder was brought by the direction of the manager, whose not very gentle anathemas, plentifully showered, were heard amidst the uproar, and he of the rings, the mustachios, and the eye-glass, disappeared from the box, erst the scene of his glory, amidst shouts of laughter from all parts of the house, mingled with sundry pieces of information from the celestials, relative to the residences of various Moll Maloneys and Sally Dobbses, and other euphonious named washerwomen of their acquaintance. I never beheld such an exhibition of well-deserved mortified vanity; and may here observe, that some months afterwards I recognised this worthy swaggering through the streets of Leamington, when my inquiries elicited that he was neither more nor less than a professor in the science of "Corn Extraction."

And now let us return to the schoolmaster.

His announced *début* had evidently created a sensation in H——. I could scarcely obtain a seat in the boxes, whilst the pit and gallery were densely crowded. There was a tolerable sprinkling of the gentry of the town and neighbourhood present, and many of the principal tradesmen with their families. I noticed that the conversation seemed generally to turn upon the "first appearance," whilst the humour expressed in most of the countenances around me, during their interchange of remarks on the subject, seemed to indicate an expectation of something laughable in the performance about to take place, rather than a histrionic display of merit. Observations which, from my position amongst them, I could not fail to hear, such as "great pity," "not at all," "great vanity," "half cracked," and the like, pretty plainly indicated the animus that had filled the house.

Amidst a hubbub of voices, the overture, by an orchestra of four, was "done," the bell rang, the curtain rose, and breathless silence awaited the moment of the aspirant's advent.

Many amusing first appearances have I witnessed, some of them scarcely credible displays of weaknesses in histrionic essays on the part of those who, in every other respect, were sensible enough. I remember being present at a private friendly exhibition of one would-be actor—a clever, shrewd fellow in business, and yet, who had been so befooled as to believe that he was destined to eclipse all other tragic luminaries of the day. Two of his originally conceived new points in "Richard," sug-

gested by those who amused themselves with his weakness, I will describe. One was to imitate the barking of a canine after the line, "The dogs bark at me as I halt by them;" the other was, to throw himself with his back against the wall, extending his arms, with drawn sword thereon, as though he were crucified, remaining for a moment thus stationary, after the line, "Our bruised arms hung up for monuments." This may appear too ridiculous to be true, or too great a display of weakness for any but a positive fool to have been guilty of. In this, a fool he undoubtedly was; but there are many who will read this sketch to whom the circumstances will be familiar, and who can add their testimony, that in every other respect, he was a very sensible fellow, and a particularly first-rate man of business. I may add, also, that this stage-struck gentleman was so much in earnest, that he willingly opened his purse-strings to get on the boards of Old Drury with the view of trying his voice, which trial he made I know to be a fact, for the best of all reasons, that I was myself present. It is hardly requisite to add that this took place during the day, and that only to a chosen few. He had famous lungs; we tried all parts of the house, and, as far as strength of voice went, were one and all conscientiously prepared to back him against anything.

Another private exhibition of the kind to which I was invited, was a reading of "Hamlet" by another stage-struck worthy, who had the misfortune, also, to be afflicted with a terrible lisp. Some of his real friends had done all they could to check the mania; it was, however, in vain; whilst others, for their amusement, flattered and led him on; and, as is usually the case, the vanity of the aspirant induced him to attribute to envy those suggestions which proceeded from good nature. A compromise was at length come to between the two parties, they who had been amusing themselves at the aspirant's expense, agreeing to have one grand night, when all should be present, and by administering a ducking to the lisping Hamlet to end the farce. Accordingly, when the next exhibition took place, at a preconcerted signal, whilst the lisper of Shakspeare was in the midst of a soliloquy, the lights of the room in which the reading took place were extinguished, and Hamlet, rolled in a blanket, was carried, kicking and bellowing, to a pump, where, under a cataract of water, he promised to torture Denmark's prince no more.

Another I saw essay the part of "Othello," with a regular company, in a small country theatre. He was of course announced as "a young gentleman of the town, his first appearance on any stage." Perhaps a more ludicrous, unrehearsed stage effect than was during that *début* exhibited, was never before seen. The amateur, who from the commencement was sweating like a bull, the perspiration, in drops like large black peas, rolling down his cheeks, leaving them striped like a zebra's hide, came forward at an early stage of the performance, and, to the great amazement of the audience, in a whining, lugubrious tone of voice complained that "Iago was making fun of him." No comedy could be richer.

Of all histrionic attempts, however, that I have seen, none equal that of the stage-struck pedagogue, the subject of this paper. "Bravo, Steerer!" resounded from all parts of the house when he appeared, and so determined and general was the applause, that for some moments he was kept bowing and smiling, and smiling and bowing again, whilst pointing his digits to his heart in the most expressive manner he could command. Amidst the

cries of "bravo" there were mingled peals of laughter, proceeding, as I afterwards found, from a party of some dozen, who were thus anticipating the fun which they knew was in store. It was they who had fooled the schoolmaster to the top of his bent, and who had induced him thus to appear. Soon realised were the anticipations of those who had attended to see a laughable exhibition, and in spite of the better feelings of my nature, which prompted me to pity the poor devil who was so unwittingly diverting them by his folly, I could not refrain from joining in the peals of laughter that rang around. It was, indeed, excusable. Of all the ridiculous figures presented by any homo, moon or stage-struck, this elucidator of syntax and prosody was certainly beyond compeer. He had not the slightest idea of the stage walk, his hands and arms seemed positive incumbrances to him, and in speaking, his utterance at times was like the voice of a frightened evidence in a witness box; and then, when the cries of "speak up" became general, he proceeded to the other extreme, without the least modulation of voice, vociferating as though he had an intent upon the roof of the building.

The audience, however, particularly that portion of it who had been the cause of his appearing, seemed determined that he should make a hit, loud cheers followed almost every sentence he uttered, and each cheer he scrupulously acknowledged with a bow, accompanying it with the significant motion of his fingers pointing to where his heart might be supposed to be situated.

I was indulging in a hearty laugh, when a tap on the shoulder caused me to turn round, and in the smiling features of a fresh comer, who had managed to squeeze himself into a standing place near me, I recognised, after some little uncertainty, the very welcome sight of an old and much-esteemed schoolfellow. Such unexpected rencontres are by no means unfrequent in our wandering life, and, I may add, form not the least pleasing of its features. The meeting was unexpected on both sides; many years had past since we had last seen each other, and it appeared that he had but recently arrived in H——, and was filling the post of sub-editor on the leading newspaper of the town. A few remarks on old times, old acquaintances, and present prospects, and our conversation turned to the *débutant* whose performance had caused so much merriment.

"What think you of the schoolmaster?" inquired my friend, whom I shall here call Meredith.

"That he is a very great ass," I replied, "or a shrewd fellow who is playing the fool for a purpose."

"Far from the latter, I assure you," was the rejoinder. "I have come from behind the scenes where they have had much difficulty with him. At the critical moment his confidence forsook him, and I know not," added the speaker, laughing, "whether to attribute to unsophisticated cogniac, or to hints of imperishable renown,—that you have had the opportunity of witnessing his decidedly original conceptions. You are, perhaps, not aware," he continued, "that this Steerer has thrown up a good school to take to the stage, believing that, in the walks of the drama, he is destined to astonish the world."

"He has astonished me," I rejoined, "but I suppose some of the knowing ones in the town have discovered his weak point, and, for their amusement, thus worked upon it."

"Exactly so," said Meredith; "and if you cast your eyes to the op-

posite box, where the stout man in a buff waistcoat sits in front, in him and those around him you see the conspirators. They form part of a set who regularly spend their evenings in the smoke-room of the Lion, in which place the schoolmaster first broke ground, and I believe the game commenced by his volunteering one night to read certain passages of Shakspeare to them as they ought to be read. Herein was his weak point revealed, though the man lacks not sense in most things, and is, moreover, a man of education. The gullibility, however, which he displays in this matter, arising from his excess of vanity, is, I am told, almost incredible. Kean, he already believes, possessed not a tithe of his ability. But see! he comes again."

I quitted the theatre that night with sincere feelings of pity for the poor deluded fellow who was so blindly making himself the laughing-stock of the town, and over a glass of Hollands with my friend Meredith, to whose bachelor fireside we had adjourned, I suggested the duty of endeavouring to open the eyes of poor Steerer to the real state of the case.

"At present," said my companion, "it would be utterly impossible; he thinks and dreams of nothing else. This very day, he stopped me in the street and, much excited, spoke of the event as though the fate of this and the next generation depended upon his *début*. 'Mr. Meredith,' he exclaimed, whilst holding me by the button, 'I shall expect the assistance, at all events the honest support, of the press, should there be an attempt to cry me down.' No, I am sure your charitable suggestion would, particularly after such a reception, (for I need not tell you he could not see that the audience was laughing at him), be attributed to envy. How truly Bishop Hall says: 'A conceited man must be a fool, for that overweening opinion he hath of himself excludes all opportunity of purchasing knowledge.' And, again, how happy the illustration with which the divine accompanies the observation: 'That a vessel, once full of never-so-base liquor, will not give room to the costliest, but spills besides whatsoever is infused.' No, no, leave Steerer to find out his own overweening vanity, the cure will then be effectual."

"Alas! poor Steerer," I exclaimed, although little deeming at the moment that I was destined on a future day to witness the disastrous results which I then foresaw would follow the vain pedagogue's ambitious folly.

The following night I again visited the theatre, which was again densely crowded. Steerer had certainly created a great sensation; previous to his appearance the place had been all but deserted, and this sudden turn, which was of course so highly flattering to the *débutant*, could not be less gratifying to the manager, as a welcome resuscitator of the finance department.

There are many who would deem such a conceited, weak-minded piece of humanity as this pedagogue, to be totally unworthy of attention, and object to visit a place where such a display of weakness was exhibited; but may we not, I would in extenuation advance, learn a lesson therefrom. Are we all sensible of our own weak points—may not such displays lead us to institute researches to discover our own? Moreover, was it not Burke who said, "That wise men learned more by fools than fools by wise men?"

Well, on the second night great indeed was the fun. Steerer had gained more confidence with his success, and with his perfect ignorance of

stage business, graceless figure, and inharmonious voice, was more ridiculous than ever.

Steerer followed not in the wake of any other performer. His dying, for the Spanish cavalier (the character he sustained in the second night's piece) was rapiered, was the richest part of the performance. It was, indeed, original; reality was nothing like it, and as with the last long-drawn gasp he stretched his five feet nine on the stage, the cries of applause were deafening. We have all heard of Romeo Coates, and his second edition of dying; but Steerer was no follower of Romeo Coates, although he, too, died once and again. He rose not to totter, fall, and gasp again, but raising himself on elbow, the supposed-to-be-dead cavalier acknowledged the plaudits of the house by repeated smiles and bows, and when the cheers had at length subsided, he stretched himself out once more as stiff as any poker.

The gem, however, of the evening, was his delivery of *Richard's* soliloquy,

Now is the winter of our discontent.

He was to give various readings from Shakspeare, and this was selected as the first. Old, or as some are pleased to denominate him, "the Kean," if I remember aright, in his first scene as *Richard*, entered with slow gait and arms folded, as if musing. The younger Kean enters with a rapid step. Steerer's *entrée* was something between the two, an indescribable kind of dot-and-carry-one shuffle. The reading selected to be given first, had, I learned, been a great favourite at the Lion, where the schoolmaster, mounted on the long table, had given it "many a time and oft," amidst great applause.

His delivery was something in the "Norval" schoolboy style, but so rapid was his utterance that, as I afterwards heard, the prompter found it to be totally impossible to follow him. To the audience it was quite unintelligible; but the rapidity of his motions caused considerable amusement,—jumping about the footlights like a monkey, and grinning and scowling alternately, he certainly looked about as much like a kangaroo as a king. He had given, perhaps, about a third of the soliloquy, when memory played him treacherous, and the aspirant stuck in the mud. He looked imploringly to the prompter's wing, but at that particular juncture he might as well have looked to the moon, for that functionary (as he afterwards declared in his defence) knew not where the devil Steerer had got to, or whether he was giving a reading of Shakspeare or his own. Disappointed in the prompter, and unable to remember the words, uttering an exclamation of rage at the seeming neglect, *Richard* rushed off the stage, and immediately after, a loud rumpus behind the scenes intimated to the audience that the pedagogue was pitching into the prompter.

Steerer took ; the tide was turned in favour of the drama; people flocked to the theatre to laugh, and the *débutant's* new readings and peculiarities afforded them abundance of amusement. Well known was it that he considered himself quite a genius, and that he had actually given up his school to devote his time entirely to a dramatic campaign —the opening having been so singularly successful. Some of those who, in the first instance, had been most active in bringing him out, beheld with regret the infatuation which had seized upon him, and endeavoured

to open his eyes to the real state of the case, by showing how very ridiculous he was making himself before the public, and to convince him, that so far from being on the path to imperishable renown, he was only the laughing-stock of the town. These philanthropic endeavours were met with some degree of tact by others who were not tired of the amusement. They broadly asserted, and of course Steerer believed them, that all who should endeavour to prevail upon him to quit the stage, were actuated only by a spirit of jealousy, and were secretly envious of the genius and popularity of the schoolmaster. Nay, it was whispered that the manager himself was not the least eloquent in encouraging him to go on; and an engagement was pompously announced, for I know not how many nights more, previous to Mr. S.'s *departure for the metropolitan stage.*

Amongst the many occurrences incidental to a rambler's life, the schoolmaster and his *début* had been by me long forgotten; nor should I have thought it worthy of recollection or relation but for the singular circumstances attending our second meeting, and as showing the evil effects of practising upon a man's weak point.

Kington is a favourite little town of mine. There is ever an air of serenity pervading it, particularly pleasing as a contrast to the hurly-burly of more bustling places. Situated in an arena formed by hills, well cultivated, the stranger, on first beholding it, cannot but be struck with the snugness of its appearance. On approaching it from the Hereford-road, he might deem, whilst contemplating the cluster of tenements in the valley before him, that in the sweet retreat presented so charmingly to his view he beheld a tranquil and happy home of man, far removed from the turmoil of the world, and where (did not his knowledge of human nature interfere with the pleasing illusion) its cares and sorrows were unknown. The church spire tapering up from a clump of trees, which hide the body of the sacred edifice from view, forms a pleasing feature in the scene; whilst the liquid element, so great a desideratum in a landscape, displays itself in a tortuous stream, puzzling the eye whether to dwell on its silvery brightness, or the rich pastures by which it meanders through the valley. Kington is a border town, and though the hills which surround it are richly fertile, still, in the background, standing out in bold and rugged relief against the horizon, are seen huge sterile mountains, which speak of the land of leeks, and tell the traveller, who thus surveys them, that he approaches the confines of merry England.

It was on a cold though fine and starlight night in November, some three years after the occurrence of the events already related, when being alone, and without the prospect of companionship, I sallied out for a walk from the Oxford Arms, the principal hotel of the quiet country-town whose situation I have endeavoured to describe, purposing to take a stroll round its picturesquely situated churchyard.

My attention, however, on passing the bar, was arrested by a large printed bill, which, laying on the table, and headed in giant letter "Great Treat!" induced me to take it up and peruse its contents. I was not a little pleased to find that some individual, rejoicing under the name of Anderton, intended that night to give a performance in the large room at the Castle Inn, consisting of recitations, songs, and imitations of some of the leading actors of the day. The performance was announced

to commence precisely at seven; it was then half-past, and in the expectation of enjoying an hour's rational amusement, I directed my steps to the place of entertainment.

Thinking it not unlikely, from my being so much behind the announced time of the performance commencing, that I might find a difficulty in obtaining a seat, I took the precaution of making the inquiry if there was room of a half-starved looking fellow acting as doorkeeper, and who, with chattering teeth, was busily employed in endeavouring to make a skeleton candle of some eight-and-twenty to the pound stand upright in a capacious-mouthed candlestick, which, placed over the door, was intended to illumine the entrance.

The man stared at me, said not a word, but threw open the door. He must certainly have supposed that my inquiry was made in a bantering mood, for, on making a step into the interior, I beheld, instead of a large audience, two individuals only, standing by the fire, engaged in earnest conversation, the voice of one of them sounding strangely familiar to my ears. I was about to retire, with the intention of taking a stroll until the company should arrive, when the familiar voice exclaimed,

"Don't go, sir; I daresay we shall have more here presently. Do please to walk in."

There was a tone of entreaty in the voice which induced me at once to comply; and advancing to the fireplace where he stood, I recognised, in the attenuated form and almost cadaverous countenance of the speaker, Steerer, the stage-struck pedagogue. I started with surprise, which he probably did not notice, for, politely handing me a seat, he began to express his fears that the intense coldness of the night would be very much against him, and that he should have little or no company.

The other individual I at once recognised as a printer in the town, who, in the course of conversation, informed me that he had printed Mr. Anderton's bills, and taken a ticket. A glass of brandy-and-water had been ordered for the ex-schoolmaster by my fellow-visitor, which as I entered made its appearance, and which, after tossing off with much seeming relish, was followed by another which I had requested him to have with me.

Hissing hot as it was, he gulped it down, not for any particular gratification which his palate experienced in the transmission of the fluid, but, as he said, to raise or bring back other spirits which were rapidly deserting him; and well they might, for the large and almost empty room echoed his voice, and, as if in mockery, rows of empty seats were ranged before him. With much regret I saw a third glass of spirits following its predecessors, and from the sudden wildness lit up in his eye, and vehemence of manner in that which followed, I could not but come to the conclusion that he drank on an empty stomach, and that with the poor devil it had been a dinnerless day.

The printer and myself both expressed the gratification it would afford us to listen to a comic song, written by himself, which he requested us to pay attention to, and say if it was not a disgrace to the town that a man of his talent should be so cruelly neglected. The song which he gave us might, for aught I remember to the contrary, have been very good, but the antics which he performed during the time of its delivery, and his wildness of manner, alone engrossed my attention, whilst I was lost in speculation as to the probable vicissitudes he might

have gone through since I last beheld him. His ridiculous performance would have caused me to laugh heartily, but for the knowledge of his being a broken man; and his attempts to be facetious under the circumstances, forcibly brought to my recollection a remark of Curran's, in speaking of an individual, that he looked about as mirthful as the "nails of a coffin." I called to mind with regret, having thus before me the melancholy results, the time when, with the rest of his deceivers, I had cried "Bravo!" to the echo.

The night drew on, but, save the entrance of the thin doorkeeper, who came to snuff the candles and poke up the fire, we saw not another soul.

"Gentlemen," said the itinerant, "there's no encouragement for true talent, not the least; but this is all of a piece with my fortune; a man with my abilities deserves some fostering hand to be held out to him, to give his genius fair scope; but destiny, gentlemen—yes, despotic destiny, who can fight against? By the way," he continued, "you shall hear a piece which I wrote on that very subject. I gave it, for the first time, last week in Brecon, and quite brought down the house with it; the audience was small, but discriminating; you shall hear it—my own composition, and not a borrowed idea throughout." Then, throwing himself into an attitude, he began. If I remember aright, he was himself the subject of the piece, in which there was a plentiful sprinkling of the usual "sunny hopes," "dark despair," "wreck, death, and madness."

The printer was a nervous man: more than once during the evening he had to me hinted at the policy of beating a retreat, and he now took an opportunity to whisper in my ear that he felt convinced there was a something defective in the upper tenement of the actor—that he was, indeed, staring mad. The last tragic burst on the part of the performer seemed to complete the effect on the printer. With a very significant nod to me, and an alarmed look at Steerer, who was doing a bit of pathetic, his eyes rivetted on the ceiling, with a noiseless step he glided out of the room. The man of types having departed, I resolved to show the broken player that I knew the name of Anderton to be assumed, and that I had seen him before.

"Steerer," said I, bringing out the name in as careless a manner as I could command, "you have done quite enough to convince me that——"

"Steerer!" he exclaimed, interrupting me. "Ha! then you know me?"

A succession of questions followed; and, to my great astonishment, he dwelt on the time of his *début* at H—— as one of the brightest passages of his life.

Adversity had evidently not worn its jewel for him; his vanity was as great as ever, and I had some difficulty in drawing him from the recapitulation of the parts he had played, and the crowded houses which he then drew, to the events of his downward career.

"Ah, sir!" said he, "there, I believe, I was appreciated; but who can fight against adverse fate?—my prospects were then indeed bright; but, alas! there is a fatality attending all my efforts since." He then began to quote passages from his own "Destiny" to bear upon the case. I could not induce him to descend to the particulars of his wanderings; his pride, doubtless, preventing his relating to me the many humble

things he had been compelled to stoop to; the sum and substance of his information being given, to my surprise, in a quotation from Cowper. "Yes," said he, "since then, in the language of the poet, I have been,

> Dropping buckets into empty wells,
> And growing old in drawing nothing up."

By this time it had become late. I wished to leave him, and was endeavouring to devise some plan by which I could give him a lift without hurting his feelings, when, to my surprise, he thus addressed me:

"Will you confer a favour on me, sir?"

"Anything in my power," I replied, "with pleasure."

"I will not tax your generosity much," he returned. "You have expressed your commiseration for my disappointments in life; have the kindness to conduct me to the nearest river, in whose waters I may find refuge from the fate that persecutes me, and a retreat from an ungenerous world."

The earnestness with which this was said left no doubt as to the way in which the adventurer intended me to receive it, but I replied to his question only with a laugh. That I should make so very light of the matter appeared to annoy him, and he again repeated, laying great emphasis on each syllable—"Will you, sir, oblige me by showing me the way to the nearest river?"

For a moment I hesitated how to act. A thought struck me; I felt satisfied that his suicidal intentions would prove to be but mere talk.

"Oh, certainly," I replied; "if you are really in earnest, come along."

And forth we sallied down the high street of the town. The player carried his stick, and, keeping close by my side, we were in a short time more than half way to the bridge which leads to the Hereford-road, and where the river Arrow, at the best but an inconsiderable stream, ripples along in pellucid shallowness. The night had become clouded and gloomy; the good people of the town had principally retired to rest, the streets appearing deserted save by myself and my half-cracked companion; and the watch, who, like some phantom, glides along the streets during the hours of night, the sole and solitary guardian of the place.

We had proceeded so far very quietly, when the gentleman of recitation and song, seized with a sudden fit of frenzy, began to belabour some window-shutters with his stick, crying at the same time, with a voice loud enough to awaken the seven sleepers,

"Holloa! ye humdrum, soulless, clod-hopping crew! where are my bills?—where are my bills, I say, ye benighted boors?—awake! I say, awake!"

And, at the conclusion, another shower of blows descended on the shutters. Several windows were thrown open, and night-capped heads popped out, from one of which an inquiry proceeding as to what was the matter, the gentleman of recitation and song, throwing himself into position in the middle of the street, politely invited the interrogator just to step down, whilst he administered to him such a pummelling as would prevent him knowing his mother for a month to come. The guardian of the night, who had passed us but a few paces, here made a retrograde movement, and coming suddenly upon us, began to threaten the gentle-

man who had been exercising his lungs as described with an introduction to the watchhouse, if he did not speedily cease the clamour and move on. At this stage of the proceedings I interposed, stated that the gentleman was a little elated by copious draughts of a liquid possessing stimulating properties, and that I was about to show him the river, where he purposed cooling himself, and should feel flattered by his (the watchman's) company, as his lantern would be useful in the selection of a suitable spot for submersion. The watch grumbled out something about not standing gammon from anybody, and, turning on his heel, bid us beware.

We were not long in arriving at the river, and, much as I pitied the poor devil who stood by my side, I determined to act up to my resolution of facilitating to the utmost his self-killing propensity, knowing, from the shallowness of the stream that there was no danger, and also feeling satisfied that the music of the river would effect a change in his determination. I therefore explained to him the necessity of his jumping in at a certain place where he would find good depth of water, and minutely described the requisite allowance to be made for the current, which, before he was quite done for, I showed him would bear his corpus to a shallow part, unless he adopted my suggestion of making his *entrée* at the place which I had pointed out. I then commended the water to him, told him it was in its crystal brightness almost as inviting as Clarence's malmsey—and trusting that he would not lose heart, and, like Cæsar in the Tiber, cry "Help me!" when he did sink—I extended my hand to say good-by.

Fortunately for my explanation, the night was too dark for him to perceive the stony bed of the stream, and he was certainly not a little staggered by the coolness with which I discussed the matter. Whilst I was cogitating in what manner he would beat a retreat—for I soon discovered that the sight of the water had worked a wonderful change in his intention—he exclaimed,

"I have changed my mind; the place is not worthy of the deed; an ignoble stream like this shall not receive me; no, when I do seek the waters of oblivion, it shall be in Avon—Will's own sweet Avon." Then suddenly dropping his voice and changing his bombast style, he approached near me, and laying his hand heavily on my arm, almost hissed the words in my ear, "A bullet would do it better. Come, let us return, for I am choking with thirst."

"Then you are not for a journey over Styx to-night?" said I. "Well, make it agreeable, but if you like to do the business at once, I have a brace of beautiful barkers at my inn, hair triggers, and ready loaded—what say you?"

He pretended not to hear me, but led the way from the side of the river.

Before leaving the inn to escort him to the water, I had, unknown to the poor itinerant, ordered supper to be provided, and returning with him soon after, had the pleasure of seeing him busily employed in close attention to a fine steak. Rich as nectar he declared to be the home-brewed which washed it down, and in the discussion of some real Glenlivet which followed, his bills and his sorrows were forgotten.

The ex-schoolmaster left Kington the following morning, with a heart light as his pocket. His host, a boniface of the old school—one of the few who are scattered over the face of the earth, the redeeming spots in the too general money-worshipping selfish stratum of humanity—had,

at my invitation, joined us the night previous after supper, and, whilst inhaling the fragrant weed from his companion-pipe, listened to Steerer's history, and showed his sympathy for the poor player, by including breakfast for the morrow, and settling the bill in the flames. In addition to this, from another who, knowing his history, had felt deeply touched by his misfortunes, he received also a little assistance; and on the morrow he accepted a seat in my gig, my route lying near a village some miles distant, where he intended "giving a night."

It was a bright bracing morning; merrily shone the sun; nature looked gay and happy, and one might hardly deem, whilst contemplating hill and valley luxuriating in the sunshine, that care could dwell on earth so fair. The broken player at my side felt its exhilarating influence; he spoke of hope and bright days perhaps yet in store. We parted with a hearty shake of the hand; and, a little after, as I turned to take another look ere a winding in the road should hide him from my sight, with his suit of rusty black and bundle on shoulder, plodding down a lane to the neighbouring village, was the last I saw of the stage-struck pedagogue.

Since that moment many years have rolled into the past. I have been frequently through all parts of England, yet my path has never again been crossed by poor Steerer; but whether he has succumbed beneath the iron hand of despair, or gathered wreaths in the garden of hope—

> Auspicious hope, in thy sweet garden grow
> Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe.

The fate of Steerer will ever be an interesting object of my inquiries, and I shall frequently recal, in my mind's eye, the scenes of his eccentricities,

> Till memory lends her light no more.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

The Vestibule.

Chapter II.

I stood at the outer door of the saloon in a state of mind not painful; pleased with my visit, and Æthra's calm demeanour, yet sad that my chief desire was unaccomplished. I stood for several minutes without effort to proceed, and then approached a window. Below there was a pleasant garden; the countess was there with her new cousin. My search was for another! I walked again towards the door; it opened slowly, and closed: Adora had entered. I gave utterance to an exclamation of delight, and rushed towards her with open arms, whispering, "Divine Adora!" At my words, she sank with her cheek on my heart, saying, "It is done; my lot is sealed."

Thus were supplied the concluding proofs of love, mutual and ardent; love engendered by sight alone, but based on many affections. Her eyes had fallen on me in the church, only once; it was enough,—she dared not raise them to me more. Our eyes had met; in an instant all the sympathetic movements of either soul were revealed, and blending they produced one lasting concord. The vast and sombre feeling, the common want of some pursuit of joy,—these the mutual glance imaged forth, and

they lived like burning frescoes floating in the atmosphere of the spirit. She dared not look again; what she had seen had been revealed, not sought; and it was secured to her by the pledge of innocence. It was a heaven—not above, like that which the convent had promised her, but descending—and in its embrace awarding the real peace of divine love and holy contemplation. The heaven of which she had before dreamed had its sunbeams for the novice, but shadows only for the veiled.

What had she escaped? what dangers dreary and cold in those haunts of suicidal quiet, of religious peace! Her earnest fancy, her love unconscious of the just sources of rapture, had sunk solitary on the bosom of heaven; the ripe affection had deemed its uses subservient to life-long hope, and hope to eternity. She had been taught, and had believed, that life was shorter than it is, shorter by many a span. The span of human love, which is like the rainbow, bright ever amidst showers, in every hue gorgeous, its blush inhabiting both the earth and heaven. The span of maternity, which encircles the virgin in the temple of the Most High, where, ordained a priestess, and her lap sanctified for an altar, she offers up her child. The span of matured being, when the worldly judgment is strong as iron, the perception clear, the enjoyment of truth perfect, the will disciplined, the passions calm and obedient, the hope equal to the destiny of the hidden day. When to acquire knowledge is sweet; to live in the history of the past, a recompense for death; to dispense benevolence, an amend for human trial. Life is only short when time is barren! Religious seclusion, with the mind and body fruitless, what is thy offering to Heaven?

She had seen me once and loved; again, and had mourned; a third time, and was resigned.

"My Adora!" I said, "we must not part again;" and I pressed her cheek to my heart.

Her head lay on my arm, that symmetrical head, with its braided hair of raven hue. As I spoke, a purple shade was reflected by the fringed eyelashes from those deep blue eyes upon the clear cheek. Oh, the revelation of those eyes on which floated tears of expression—tears which held a pure and deep soul suspended in their tremulous beams. It was a revelation of all the heart, which laid naked its secret recesses, and showed all its glowing, confiding affection. Oh, that the first moment of mutual adoration could have been made perpetual; what is life without it, when at its bare recollection I could prostrate myself on the pavement, and worship the remembrance of the past?

When she recovered her self-possession, I said again, "Adora, read these lines—the consent of Dione to our union: we must not part again."

"It is for thee to order," she said; "for me to obey. I am passive in thy hands; do as thou wilt with thine own." Saying this she read the paper.

How angel-like was that answer, and it came before she had perused the words of her relation. Her love was perfect; it embraced the unsullied confidence of a sister. It was impossible to act for her separately from myself; there was a union of souls.

"Then let us leave this house together instantly," I said. "Bring your maid with you, and we will go; we must not hazard another separation."

She reflected a moment, and said, "No; it will not really make my cousin Æthra unhappy, and it will save me from the convent, which now

I cannot enter. This step can alone save me, for my strange father comes before many days to conduct me to the cheerless abode of the unloving; and how could I take the holy vow?"

She did not hesitate longer, but as if cognizant of her only remaining course, and with Dione's consent and blessing in her heart, she ran to her room, and shortly returned with her companion, both dressed for the open air.

We descended the stairs and entered a carriage. I desired the driver to proceed to the hotel, where we arrived, and alighted. I asked for a retired apartment by the garden. The rooms into which we were accordingly ushered were secluded; they were at the extremity of a side passage, apart from the thoroughfare of the house. The weather was still sultry, it being the season of the vendemmia; we were therefore glad to rest. We sat down to refreshments of biscuit, vanilla ice, and fruits; and after a short time had elapsed, I passed with Adora through the open casement into the garden, while Evadne, her companion, remained.

We paced the garden together: Adora, instead of being agitated, expressed perfect happiness in looks and words.

"Kind and generous creature," I said, "you shall not find me unworthy of this confidence. It is now necessary that we should travel; what say you to this? To remain in Milan an hour may endanger all."

"Do that which you consider to be right," she said; "but, above all, take steps that we may not now be parted—that would be terrible for us both."

"Oh, Adora! view me now as standing with thee in the presence of Heaven, as pledging my faith to thee for ever. God be our witness! angels register the act! Dost thou accept me?"

"I accept thee—I am thine."

"Then it is done; the divine ceremony is performed; the human, when we are safe, shall succeed it."

"I know thy truth, and will follow whither thou mayst lead me," said Adora.

I had at first determined to proceed to Venice, and there seek the sanction of the Church to our union; but possible difficulties presented themselves to my mind; and, if such should arise, it was near the country where I had found, and might again lose, my bride. Finally, therefore, I resolved to go home; there my own priest was at hand. It was a long journey for my companion; she, however, was content to take it.

By travelling with speed, and making but few stoppages day or night, we arrived at Bologna on the morning after our departure, and, towards evening, at Florence, where we were married.

We proceeded on the following morning, calm and happy, to my country dwelling; my worthy aunt Trivulzio was established there; she received me with affection, and Adora with admiration and surprise.

Ippolito, with my suite, followed; he had not seen Adora unveiled, and had as yet no suspicion that she was his sister.

Chapter III.

Rapid was the march of these events; so rapid, that I could still only consider my union with Adora as mental. Our souls had been long fused into one, but, so invincible is delicacy when based on affection, all I had dared was to imprint a kiss on the cheek of my beloved. So

childish was her character, to have claimed all the sleeping love which was pillowed on her breast would have affrighted her;—would have resolved the magic of an elevated passion into its earthly elements.

Adora was not seventeen when she became my bride. Consigned, during her childhood, to strange hands by an eccentric father, who still survived, she had been educated by women and their priests for the convent. In her the innocence of childhood still prevailed; the revelations of nature having been rendered almost inanimate by careful training. She had all to learn of that which bears relation to the tree of knowledge. The wide capacity of her mind, the freezing lessons she had been subjected to, rendered it easy to attach her youthful thoughts to nature without rather than within;—so overclouding this latter, that its true light appeared not yet to have reached her sphere.

The touch of my hand, the pressure of her heart to mine, for a long time neither caused her breath to quicken, nor her breast to heave: it told only upon her fervid eyes, calling forth a sister's joy. How grateful to my harassed spirit was such love! Chaste was it, and chastening, as the design that love should be which preceded its incarnation. When at length her cheek blanched, and her bosom quivered with the pale emotion, I soothed her. I said, "Fear not, it was intended to be thus; it is joy that you now feel; only sin can make us ashamed of this new affection. You have hitherto confided in me; trust in me to the end of our united days." The words had their due effect: an exalted smile and beaming eye mingled their joys with a blush of gladness; she felt the truth of my voice, she forgot herself, acknowledging in silence, as in the twilight of early love, how faultless was the design of nature, how immaculate the wisdom of the Eternal.

The sacred character of my love for Adora made me anxious to stifle the memory of the past, but the effort to do so was in vain; in fact, the attempt to forget wickedness must ever be futile. With what veil can it be hidden? Can the soul, like the globe whereupon it wanders, be subject to convulsions, in whose course the monsters which it has cherished become buried under tombs too deep to be disturbed; can mountains cover them, or oceans engulph their remains? Where is the Necropolis of the Soul! The stream of bliss in which my days now flowed,—how was it to be kept pure?—how separate from the turbid and brawling torrent behind? Ever and anon, in the midst of brightness and peace, I heard dark waters roaring still over their rocky course afar; like the sounds of ocean by night, whose wave descends unseen, and strikes the breast with secret dread. As thus the plunging emotion has started up within me, it has placed before my eyes some awful retrospect, the vision of some sin of old. If memory hath its tombs, they are not the graves of perished but of living remembrance,—sepulchres wherein agonised thoughts seek their rest, and sometimes drop, through exhaustion, into sleep, but only to awake to the horrors of a resurrection; the pang deeper because refreshed, and the judgment-day closer at hand.

How then I wished that virtue had been my earliest lesson, its voice the music of my childhood! Who had ever called me aside to say, "Life hath its limits, my child; do now as thou wouldst in thy dying hour!" I was left to myself; I walked in the paths I liked best. I have lived to learn that repentance is not the blotter out, but only the agony of crime;—the recollection of every misdeed, with its halo of sorrow, has followed me through the pathways of time.

While thus happy, the sense of insecurity which undermines the feeling of bliss in the wicked, how fearful its whispers of condemnation! To possess all that human nature can desire, to know that justice itself could have served even the virtuous no better. But then the doubt arises how long can it last? The possession of wealth arouses no such suspicion in the wicked; gold is the perquisite of the sinner; to inherit it occasions him no remorse. But could a virtuous and lovely soul, so fresh from the laboratory of Heaven, be allowed to mingle long with the self-exalted, with the impure thinker?—him whose doom is still to reflect; who has only to meditate to descend once more among the damned.

How are these riddles to be solved?—engendered as they are amid the helpless passivity of man, and the silence of an Almighty!

Chapter IV.

A month had run its course since my marriage; during that time Adora had lived secluded: she had as yet seen no one except the Lady Trivulzio. Ippolito had returned to Aula; it was right that he should see his sister. I had now participated in a period of utmost enchantment in the possession of my bride, and was anxious to confer upon her and her brother a new happiness,—a blessing of which neither had dreamt. I had talked to Adora of her family, and had gathered from her a few bare particulars of her father, Don Abarbanel. She had not lived with him from childhood: her youth had been passed with Dione, and at intervals with Theonoe and Æthra. If she knew that a brother had ever been born to her, she believed him to have been lost in infancy; the surprise, therefore, both to Adora and Ippolito, was to be complete. I appointed the sweet youth an interview with the bride; not a formal one, however, for I told him that he was to think of Adora with a brother's regard.

At this announcement a shade of disappointment, such as once before I had seen on his countenance when I had to assure him that he was not my brother, a second time crossed his eyes. What was the substance of that shade I truly conjectured; nor was he slow to confirm the meaning which his looks betokened.

"I am grateful to thee for this fresh favour," said he, "and I will faithfully devote myself to Adora's good. This, then," he added, "is the sister thou didst promise me?"

"You had hoped for a sister of your own, dear Ippolito, was it not so? Never mind, she will be more than a sister to you."

"The feeling which you have divined has passed," said Ippolito, "and I will endeavour to explain its origin. It arose from pride; the desire all have, especially in the midst of open rejoicings, to congratulate themselves at having derived birth without reproach; this desire I just now felt the stronger, that I might have appeared spotless before Adora." He sighed deeply, and resumed: "How much I owe thee! Thou hast bestowed upon me thine own heart, hast made me thy brother, and thou wouldst now admit me to the love of thy beautiful bride!"

He looked the image of her as he spoke.

"What tells you," asked I, "that she is thus beautiful?"

"Oh, I feel it; she must be so; is she not thine? I feel inwardly beautiful myself at moments when thou lookest at me with affection. Then thy soul enters me, and I am myself no longer."

How truly he spoke; and what unconscious evidence he displayed of

the metemsychosis he described; for Adora, then occupying all his thoughtful being, he felt that she was beautiful; and the more so, that his consciousness, as well as his mortal form, was after her image.

My father's wisdom, gained by him at such cost, and which nothing but filial piety led me to regard, had thus at last ensured the harmony of my final lot, when the sympathies of my intellect and heart were matured. I had, after all, never loved more than one, though it was through the forms of many; for I now plainly saw that all were of a type, while one only of the group was commissioned by nature to conjure up affection in me to the brim. Melissa, I had surely loved; Giuditta, too; but the first I had loved to hate, the last I had hated to love. Next Æthra crossed my path; and like the others outwardly, her resemblance to them reminded me of their inward being. Even Theonoe herself I never could behold but as a sister, whom I could have kissed with simple truth. And the beautiful Ippolito, the boy who in brilliancy of looks surpassed them all; I loved him unremittingly, and with such ardour, that he assumed the feminine form of my existence in my dreams. I cast my eyes into space, seeking for one not more beautiful than I had yet beheld, and found her at length in Adora, the perfected image of the same glorious model.

These reflections flitted through me as, in deepest satisfaction, I gazed upon her.

"Adora," I said to her in turn, "can there be realised to yourself another, not only like you, but no less good and lovely? If such you saw, could you love him as a brother?"

Her eyes gave out an intenser light; her arms approached mine.

"No; that is not what I mean, my beloved. There exists a being who, next to thee, is dearest to me on earth. He is my brother. Canst thou love him as thine?"

"Your brother! I could love such a one as you describe. But you have no brother."

"I have. He is thy gift. But judge for thyself; he comes."

Ippolito entered. With steady, undeviating look he approached his sister. She stood firm, and their eyes became fastened on each other. The expression of countenance in both was alike—happy and wonder-wrought. Their faces, too, were as each other's image in a glass. Indeed, while they spoke not, they at the same moment, as by a simultaneous thought, arising in parallel natures under the same conditions, turned their eyes to the mirror which stood at their side, and, by comparison of themselves with one another, saw that they were as one. No longer able to bear the suspense myself, I said,

"Embrace each other. She, Ippolito, is your own sister. He, Adora, is your brother."

They wept bitterly, and apart, as if the gap of years yet separated them; so I placed them in each other's embrace.

Chapter V.

I might be said at this time to be perfectly happy, for if remorse did sometimes threaten, the bliss which my possession of Adora conferred on me was transcendent. My happiness was, therefore, for a time greater, though liable to perturbations, than if perfect peace had been established in my heart. In due time I surrounded myself with eminent men—Musonio, and other highly-trained intellects; Pulci, and a circle of

divines—men whose moral attainments were spotless. Piombino and the art-worshippers I ceased to receive, for the pallid ghost of Moro came ever to my imagination at the side of his surviving friend.

Adora received my associates with becoming grace and cheerfulness; but she seemed never perfectly happy except when alone with me, and then she looked too deeply content, her devotion too great. It was this affection, so tender and thrilling, which made me tremble as for my life. The transition from misery the most earthly, to such bliss, was almost too sudden. I was even disposed to avoid, at times, this ever-flushing stream of happiness, not from satiety, but dread lest it should sooner end its course if so lavishly enjoyed. On this account, then, I would invite my guests, live with them through the midnight, dip with them into the crevices of forbidden truth, climb the shadowy precipices of the soul's morrow; and the imagination has listened as the mighty flood of truth, moving ever on, has reached some brink, has listened as the bottomless flood has gone over, has listened to catch a sound of its next course in the unseen, but it has fallen into depths too vast to send noise back to the ear. In this blank I have returned to my love, and there has been a blank no more. Though science were empty, love was full; and beauty, in its resplendent lights of form and spirit, seemed better than the cold knowledge of how such came to be.

Oh, happy days, would that such had been for all! To love as I loved, to be loved as I was loved, is to know, to think, to feel with, to be God! Oh, days, few, indeed, for man; but perpetual in the Divine eternity, ye send back sounds upon the heart as ye forward flow.

So time rolled by, and gave us hourly samples of the treasures it bore for those whose turn it was to have them. I led a more active life; saw my steward, the venerable Anselmo, often; dictated and inspected works on the land; planned aqueducts and bridges; designed cottages; and, what surprised me the most, worked with my own hands. The pursuit of manual labour procured me fresh health, kept me from literary work, and restored to my mind and frame unwonted vigour. How much might not an intelligent class of labourers discover while performing their daily round of labour! I had scarce been a month at work myself, when, digging a deep trench near the castle, for the purpose of conveying a pool of water over the rocky steep, my spade struck as upon a hard pavement. I proceeded to examine the ground with minute attention: the earth being cleared away, I found the surface to be uneven, and it was not long before it was ascertained that instead of a floor I had fallen upon some massive sculpture. This discovery gave fresh earnestness to the pursuit, and at length the whole was uncovered; and there, uninjured by time, every feature perfect, a winged sphinx reposed.

My intercourse with Musonio had been renewed of late, since my pursuits had become more elevated; he enabled me to see the meaning of this sign. I learned from him that the winged sphinx and lion were guardians of the Etruscan tomb, as of the Egyptian. Near at hand, then, perhaps beneath the very spot where I stood, was the burial-place of one or more of the ancient masters of the land. For the present I determined to say little of the discovery, but ordered a wall to be placed round the sphinx to protect it from injury, as a sight of it would be eagerly sought by the curious. In the mean time I set my mind to work for authorities on the burial-places of the ancients, without much success. One Roman historian, on the authority of another, described a tomb at

Chiusi as the sepulchre of Lars Porsenna: I pondered well that narration. The magnitude of the tomb appeared to exceed the limits of probability; a circumstance which could not but indicate that the scale of Etruscan tombs, at all events, was great; probable was it, indeed, that as the winged sphinx and lion were guardians of the dead of Etruria, as well as of Egypt, the tombs of both were alike vast. At Chiusi the form of the tomb was said to be pyramidical, in which it was like the Egyptian; and another point of resemblance between the two was their labyrinthine recesses. Thus, then, I obtained the idea of a spacious labyrinth tapering above into a pyramid: might not my sphinx surmount such? In the land of Nile the pyramid was frequently thus crowned by colossal sculpture; witness the great Labyrinth itself.

I reflected long and intently; I bore my conclusions to the ground whereupon my discovery had been made, and this again I compared with the written account. A new idea then struck upon my mind. Porsenna's tomb was underneath a town; might not my suspected one extend beneath my castle, which was the site of an ancient citadel? The foundations, and some of the walls which rose out of the steep which the castle overhung, were Etruscan; indeed, there were traces along the rocky boundary of Cyclopean walls, massive, formed of huge polygonal stones, and altogether ruder than the masonry of the Roman or Etruscan era, which is characterised by a higher taste and perfection, though not by equal boldness or grandeur.

Thus there were speaking proofs of the antiquity of this site, which evidently had not been deserted for three thousand years. Where had the dead of thirty centuries reposed? Not the ignoble dead, but the mighty who lived encased in armour, and bearing shield and spear, and whose stature towered aloft. They were the defenders of human liberties in the early age of time, and the infancy of justice, when, to be secure from outrage at the daily risk of life, was to enjoy freedom.

After some weeks had elapsed, it came into my mind to explore those subterraneous portions of the castle which lay in the neighbourhood of my sphinx; at the same time I dismissed messengers to Musonio, desiring his speedy presence. I had never explored the uninhabited parts of the building, nor made examination of the regions underground. A motive to do so had now arisen, and I proceeded to the task with curiosity.

In the parapet wall which bounded the north terrace walk, and arose in massive masonry out of the rock itself, appearing almost identified with it, there was a door, deep within a circular archway, which had not been set open for many years. The rusty lock was soon made to give way to force; the massive hinges creaked, but did not break, and the door swung forward against boughs of dwarf willow, which overhung and clothed the rock. From this archway a flight of steps sloped down the side of the steep, guarded outside by a huge wall, raised on circular arches, springing over the ravine beneath, and under which its waters, those of the Cecina, rushed. At a height of a few feet from the stream bank, the stairs turned at a right angle, walled in on either side, and projecting in front of the cliff itself, and, like the flight above, supported on an arched foundation. Numerous plants of a picturesque kind grew from the rock, and between the stony crevices of the steps. Among these was to be observed the maidenhair, which luxuriated ever in the spray of a falling cascade; while a variety of mossy fern formed a network down the rock.

On gaining this last flight of steps, I stood still a moment in delight,

to gaze upon a pair of winged lions which rested upon the copings of the wall, and faced the stream. They had evidently been removed from their original situation, and placed there at some remote period, their Etruscan characters being inconsistent with the Norman masonry on which they reposed. These, with the sphinx above, I should have deemed from the Nile, but I suspected that a more interesting explanation was at hand. They were in a perfect state, and continue so to this day, after a lapse of nearly fifty years. Ippolito had proceeded to Florence in quest of Musonio, and, as I might expect them on the morrow, I desisted from further search until they should arrive.

In expectation of their coming on that same evening, I walked up and down the south terrace with Adora, and paused to witness the first bursting forth of the evening star, which by silent consent we gazed at with curious love. Faint was at first its fire, like the dimness of revelation; but it came upon us at the close of twilight, the rapid crepuscula, and like a ray of hope appeared to suspend the soul between it and darkness. At the hour of nightfall, sadness damps the mortal spirit—a sadness which renders music grateful, and light a boon, especially the light of the first evening star.

We had passed the time in sweet concord, mingling thoughts the most pure in language worthy to express them. We seemed only to need an assistance apparently at hand, to raise all that lives to our own level of bliss, while, supremely blessed ourselves, we felt capable of rising to a participation of joys yet higher. From our present state to one of immortal joy had been but a simple and natural transition.

The twilight had suddenly damped our ardour; the star only stood between us and night. We hailed it with some emotion; while it could not save the gorgeous pictures of our fancy from destruction, its feeble but supernal light encouraged us, spoke of aspirations to be respected, and of patience as a means through which to realise all at last. The virtues of endurance seemed revealed in its steady beams, but we felt yet the more strongly that we were mortal.

The spirits of the community are never thus uneven; they are disturbed by selfish influences, not by those extrinsic phenomena which shake the soul itself. But a select class exists unseen among nations of men, who at evening are collected under heaven by the chimes of the firmament, and drawn into the cathedral beyond by the invitation of the sky. There may the beggar and his infant kneel as they traverse the desert where living temples subsist not more; there they will find a priest on whose alb glitters the Southern Cross—a crucifix of stars. He who has never entered a shrine below, nor looked on the frescoes which animate the dome of an earthly house of worship, may yet rise at once unto the Only, and be seen throughout—cry "Father!" and be everywhere heard.

And there even the earthly potentate, surrounded by his court and compassed by gorgeous machinery, may forget for a moment his perishable greatness, and by those heavenly silent chimes be drawn above to behold, with the beggar, a King of kings; his final rights not sacrificed to his sceptre, nor his hopes to his possessions; for he is one of these elect. The divine spark consumes the vanities of the heart, it burns there eternally, and proclaims him, to himself, an elect whose destiny has but begun; a peculiar spirit who can everywhere see the One only; a remnant cast out for a time from the nationality of the chosen, and wandering desolate among thrones.

THE MILLER'S SONG.

Ho! for the stone that crushes;
Hey! for the whirling sail;
When the old mill shakes in every plank
Like a vessel in the gale.
Hey! for the blast that driveth
The ponderous mill-wheel round,
When of the snow-storm showering
We hear the mellow sound.

Hey! for the winds of winter,
When it never bloweth ill;
In the idle breeze of summer
The miller sitteth still.
In the dull, grey night,—the long, long night,
When the frost is on the earth,
A weary man's the miller
As he sitteth by his hearth.

Hey! for the roaring hurricane
That tears the forest-tree:
Ah! the savage din of tempest
Is the miller's melody.
All night in wild December,
The whole cold night along,
O'er the buzz within and the roar without
Is heard the miller's song.

When the bare bleak moor is lying
All white beneath the moon,
The north wind roars a thunder bass
To the lonely miller's tune.
When the mill-sails wild are tossing,
Like a spirit's arms on high,
Like the arms of one beseeching
Help from the murky sky—

Help from the savage fury
Of the wind that flies above—
The wind that the blanched miller,
The grey old miller's love.
Hey! for the stout Nor-wester
That shatters the cottage pane:
The wind is the miller's vassal
That grinds his golden grain.

It may rush o'er distant mountains,
It may roar across the hill;
It may hurry along the blasted moor,
But first it drives the mill.
Summer's a weary season,
Dull looks the sunny earth;
The grey cold eve of winter
Is the time for the miller's mirth.

The miller is no coward,
Though he's pale as a frightened maid;
His cheek's as red as the crimson rose
In a snowy robe arrayed.
O! all night long when the piping wind
Is whistling loud without,
'Tween the bars of the old mill's window
At the stars he looketh out.

FLORENCE HAMILTON.

By Miss Julia Addison.

AUTHOR OF "THE CURATE OF WILDMERE."

Chapter XVI.

The stings of falsehood these shall try
And hard unkindness' altered eye
That mocks the tear it bids to flow.
GRAY.

Lady Seagrove, Miss Trimmer, and Florence, were sitting in the drawing-room, in the interval between Silverdale's departure and dressing for an early dinner party.

"I am sorry to perceive, Florence," Lady Seagrove was observing, with a gravity of manner very unusual to her, "that you still entertain the same prejudices against my poor nephew. I should have thought that my affection for him, and his relationship to me, would alone be sufficient to prepossess you in his favour."

She paused. Florence sighed, but said nothing.

"Averse as I am," continued Lady Seagrove, "to reminding any one of past kindness, surely the recollection of my more than maternal fondness for you and your sister ought also to have some weight."

"I know," said Florence, earnestly, "that I can never repay your kindness, my dearest, best friend. It is, it ought to be, the first wish of my heart to prove my gratitude; but——"

"You can prove your gratitude," interrupted Lady Seagrove. "Say only that I have your free permission to encourage Sir Robert's addresses —to tell him that you are not unfavourable to——"

"Oh, no, no! my dearest Lady Seagrove, for Heaven's sake do not tell him that. You would not have me pretend sentiments which I can never feel?"

"Gently, Florence," said Lady Seagrove, looking displeased. "This is not the manner in which young ladies ought to speak to their parents or guardians. I never anticipated such opposition from you—you, with whom my slightest wish was once as powerful as a command."

"And so it is now," said Florence, with emotion, "in every instance, except——"

"Except when my wish does not accord with your inclination. Meritorious indeed, and well calculated to impress me with the sincerity of your love and gratitude."

"Oh, Lady Seagrove, do not speak thus, I implore you!" exclaimed Florence, covering her face with her hands.

"Florence," said Lady Seagrove, "listen to what I am going to say. It grieves me to give you pain, but I warn you, that unless you speedily change your opinion and feelings on this subject, my serious displeasure will be the penalty."

The idea of a young and inexperienced girl presuming to have an opinion concerning any matrimonial alliance her friends might desire for her, appeared quite ridiculous to Lady Seagrove. Believing, as she did,

that the sooner a young lady settled in the world the better, provided her husband was rich and of good family, she considered that temper, disposition, and personal merits were of most secondary importance, if, indeed, of any importance at all. She herself had married without knowing anything of her husband's character, without any particular liking for him, and her marriage had been happy enough. It is true, he was a silly, indolent man, but then he was a man of title and fortune, and she did not want a companion in her husband. He had a large and fashionable circle of acquaintance, and allowed her to give splendid parties, and go out as much as she pleased; all which advantages Florence would have if she married Sir Robert. What if the baronet were passionate and ill-tempered now and then? Sir Henry Seagrove used to be cross and disagreeable at times, but she had never troubled herself about that; every one had their defects—men especially. Even supposing a husband to possess the most shocking temper in the world, it need not make his wife unhappy. She was never obliged to see him till dinner, and then, if they always had company when they dined at home, what time or opportunity had the worst-tempered man to be quarrelsome or tyrannical? If by chance she was threatened with the misfortune of a *tête-à-tête*, what was easier than for the wife to have a bad headache, and remain in her own room? It was natural that a young bride should like to be constantly in society, to show off her fine clothes and gay equipages. Florence liked society and amusement; what then could be her objection to Sir Robert but a foolish antipathy which it would be an act of kindness to the girl herself to compel her to conquer?

Thus reasoned Lady Seagrove; and the more she reflected, the stronger became her wish to see Florence married to her nephew, and the more resolved was she to bring about the union. She now, after a silence of some minutes, changed her mode of attack.

"Your dislike to my poor nephew," she said, "does, I confess, appear to me so strange, that had I less confidence in you, I should conclude some more fortunate individual had won your heart. You have often assured me that you had no secrets from me."

"Neither have I, dear Lady Seagrove," interrupted Florence.

"Then your objection to Sir Robert Craven is not the consequence of being in love with any one else?"

"Indeed it is not."

"I do not wonder your ladythip ith particular in inquiring," lisped Miss Trimmer, who was lolling in an arm-chair, innocently playing with the ends of her long sash, "for nothing ith tho thoon lotht ath a young ladyth heart."

"Very true," said Lady Seagrove; "but Florence is so rational and so candid, that if she assures me such is not the case——"

"I do assure you that I am not in love," said Florence, speaking with what she at least then thought to be the most perfect sincerity; "and surely, my dear Lady Seagrove, you will believe me?"

"I do, my dear child," said Lady Seagrove, feeling, as she looked at Florence's earnest, ingenuous countenance, that it was impossible to disbelieve her.

"I know, though," said Miss Trimmer, "who would be the favourite with Florenth, if she had a favourite, and that ith a thertain captain."

"Captain Wentworth?" said Florence, slightly colouring. "I did not say I had no favourites; I said I was not in love."

"And you meant to include him, when you thaid that you were not in love?"

"Of course I did!" exclaimed Florence, indignantly. "I am surprised at your asking me such a question, Miss Trimmer!"

Little Adela, who was to accompany the party in their visit, now appeared, to remind her sister that it was time to dress, and the conversation dropped.

Chapter XVII.

There reigned a solemn silence over all.

SPENCER.

She *looked* a sermon—
Each eye a lecture, and her brow a homily.

LORD BYRON.

"How dreadful it is of those Mumfords to dine at three o'clock," said Lady Seagrove, mournfully, to Florence and Miss Trimmer, as they stepped into the carriage.

"Thocking!" echoed Miss Trimmer; "quite prepothterouth!"

"I certainly should not have accepted the invitation," said Lady Seagrove, "only that the Mumfords are connexions of my old friends the Grahams, who asked me to be civil to them."

On arriving, Lady Seagrove and her companions found the family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Mumford, their son, and three daughters, sitting in formal array, ready to receive their visitors.

The eldest Miss Mumford was tall and thin, with small insignificant features, a pale yellow complexion, a very solemn expression of countenance, and sullen manners. She was attired in a sombre garb of brown silk, trimmed with dark grey ribbon, and wore her hair, which was very thin, strained tightly back from her face and fastened in a little knob behind, as if her object was to disfigure herself as much as possible.

Miss Priscilla Mumford resembled her sister in person, except that she was not quite so tall, not quite so thin, and had not quite such a forbidding aspect.

The youngest, Miss Gertrude, was very different, both in person and manners, from either of her sisters, whose junior she was by several years. She was a pretty girl, scarcely eighteen, with a well-formed, graceful figure, rather below the middle height, a complexion which reminded one of the tints of some bright flower, delicate features, soft hazel eyes, and waving chestnut ringlets. Her disposition was cheerful and lively; she liked to laugh and talk, and to run about the fields and garden; to read a good novel occasionally; to sing and play other music besides hymns and anthems, when it was not Sunday; and would sometimes express a timid wish to go to the theatre at B—— when a particularly interesting play was to be performed there. All this was considered "highly reprehensible" by the rest of her family, and her mother and elder sisters frequently pronounced her to be a very strange girl.

Mr. Simon Mumford, the son, was a grave, stolid-looking young man,

with a tall, lank, ungraceful figure, and plain features, who dressed in a style between that of a gentleman-farmer and a methodist parson.

Mr. Mumford, senior, a fat, good-humoured, elderly gentleman, was completely under the government of his wife, of whom he stood in great awe. He would have gone to a play or a concert now and then, and have invited two or three friends occasionally to play a game of whist with him had he dared, but he did not dare; he was a complete cipher. No one ever, but by a rare chance, heard of *Mr.* Mumford; it was *Mrs.* Mumford who gave dinner parties, *Mrs.* Mumford who subscribed to charitable institutions, *Mrs.* Mumford whose opinion was to be asked, or patronage solicited; in short, *Mrs.* Mumford who did everything.

After the ceremonies of salutation were over, Mrs. Mumford rang, and two white-faced, dismal-looking little girls, with their hair cropped short, and dressed in high merino frocks, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, appeared, accompanied by a hard-featured and ill-tempered looking nursemaid, who, as Mrs. Mumford whispered to Lady Seagrove, was an eminently pious and truly Christian young woman. The children, with heads painfully erect, folded arms, and stiffened figures, moved like small automatons to the centre of the room, made a low curtsey, and then stood perfectly motionless, with their feet in the first position.

"These are the young relatives I mentioned to you, Lady Seagrove," said Mrs. Mumford, "whom it pleased God to deprive of their parents, and who are placed with me for a few years. Rachel—Hannah, this is Miss Adela Hamilton, whom I permit you to form a friendship with."

The two young ladies hereupon, each making as she did so another curtsey, advanced one after another and took the hand of the young Adela, who, with her bright natural curls, rosy cheeks, and unchecked childish grace, formed a striking contrast to the artificial little puppets, of whom she seemed half afraid. She was, however, carried off by the trio, and the remainder of the party took seats.

"It is very seldom," said Mrs. Mumford to Lady Seagrove, "that I allow the regularity of the children's studies to be interrupted. I make it a rule, as I did with my own girls, to have stated periods for doing everything, which are never deviated from. Rachel and Hannah commence their religious and secular studies at six in the morning, and continue, with two hours' interruption for meals, walking, and the back-board, until eight in the evening, when, after a couple of hours' prayer and scriptural reading, they retire to rest."

Florence ventured to ask if this was not too much for children only eight and nine years old? On which her hostess, glancing towards her two elder daughters, said, with the air of one who is bringing forward an unanswerable and overpowering argument,

"I pursued this course with Abigail and Priscilla, also with Gertrude, when she was at home; but I unfortunately allowed her to pass several years of her life with a very worldly-minded aunt, and she has been an altered girl ever since. Indeed"—this was added in a lower voice—"she never was as seriously and religiously disposed as my other children. One little saint, whom it pleased the Lord to take to himself at the age of four years and three-quarters, could repeat all the New Testament, and great part of the Old, by heart."

Lady Seagrove expressed due astonishment, and Mrs. Mumford added,

"She was, indeed, an extraordinary child; so much so, that our pious friend, the Reverend Josias Damper, wrote an account of her last moments for the *New Jerusalem Trumpet*. From her earliest infancy, whenever she was asked whether she would rather have a gingerbread-nut or learn a verse out of the Psalms by heart, she would always reply, 'Oh! mamma, the verse, if you please;' and then I of course rewarded her piety by giving her two gingerbread-nuts instead of one."

Florence could not help thinking that this might have had some influence on the infant saint's choice, but she felt that it would be out of place to say so, and therefore made no comment.

Silence now fell on all the party, which was presently broken by Lady Seagrove's making a remark about the weather. Mrs. Mumford replied, that such a fine season was indeed a blessing, and uttered several pious ejaculations of gratitude for the prospect of an abundant harvest, which, she observed, the nation ought to be devoutly thankful to God for. Mr. Mumford then ventured an observation on the state of the corn-laws, but his wife cut him short by saying that she took no interest in politics, and thought that ladies never did, or at any rate never ought.

Another pause followed, during which Miss Mumford gathered courage to ask Florence in a whisper if she had taken a walk that morning.

Florence replied in the negative, and Miss Priscilla inquired whether she drew.

Florence said that she did, and not knowing what else to say, asked Miss Priscilla in return whether *she* was fond of the art.

"Yes," replied that young lady; "we all draw a little."

"What is your favourite style—do you prefer landscapes or figures?" asked Florence.

"Neither in particular," said Miss Priscilla; "we do a little in all styles."

"If you are fond of drawing landscapes from Nature," said Florence, you will find many beautiful subjects in this neighbourhood."

"Oh! we never draw from Nature," said Miss Mumford, with a deprecating look; "we none of us like pictures done from Nature."

Florence found it impossible to repress a smile at this speech; on which Miss Mumford regarded her with a stare of surprise, but said nothing.

Silence again ensued, and Florence was considering what she could possibly say next, when Lady Seagrove, whose conversation with the elders of the family had come to a stand-still, asked Miss Priscilla whether she painted in oils or water colours.

"Oh, we only draw in pencil," was the answer; "our master does not like colour. My sister tried chalks once, but she soon gave them up."

Lady Seagrove observed that views of familiar places were interesting.

Mrs. Mumford assented; but added, that she did not like her girls to draw out of doors, they were so liable to be stared at; and that she considered drawing only an in-doors occupation.

After this there was a tremendously long pause, during which nothing was heard but some half-suppressed yawns from poor Mr. Mumford, who began to be greatly vapoured, and to want his dinner exceedingly.

Presently the sound of wheels attracted the attention of all the party, and Miss Gertrude Mumford, who till then had been sitting quietly at her mother's elbow, as grave and silent as even *she* could desire, started up, and advanced a few steps towards the window, exclaiming,

"Oh, mamma, I hope that is Mr. Pemberton!"

"Pray sit down, again, directly, Gertrude, and do not talk so much," said Mrs. Mumford, frowning, and pulling her daughter by the arm. "You astonish me. I am sure Miss Hamilton is quite shocked."

Thus reproved, poor Gertrude resumed her seat, and relapsed into silence. She was, however, consoled by perceiving that Florence did not appear at all shocked, but frequently addressed her, and evidently thought her by no means the faulty and insignificant person her family did.

In a few moments Pemberton made his appearance. Mr. Silverdale followed him; and shortly afterwards dinner was announced, to the great relief of all the company.

Miss Trimmer, who had been endeavouring to draw Mr. Mumford, junior, into a flirtation ever since her arrival, without success, now gave it up as a hopeless case. The dinner hour "dragged its slow length along" heavily enough. The character and deportment of the host and hostess necessarily determine in a great measure the tone of their society, and never was this more strikingly evident than in the present instance, when all the guests—even the lively Pemberton, who could be witty and amusing under almost any circumstances—were subdued, and sobered down to melancholy dulness, by the oppressive and mirth-repelling influence of the Mumford family. It is true that many of the individuals composing the circle had peculiar and private reasons of their own for being less gay or more thoughtful than usual, and this did not contribute by any means to dissipate the prevailing gravity.

Mrs. Mumford, who seldom had company, and endeavoured to make a great show with little means, was absorbed in anxious solicitude that everything should, as she expressed it, "go off well."

Miss Trimmer was annoyed because she was seated between two Miss Mumfords, while Florence had the two most agreeable beaux one on each side of her.

Lady Seagrove could not recover her equanimity, which had been completely deranged by the earliness of the dinner hour.

Pemberton could not banish the recollection that he was shortly to be involved in what promised to be a most unpleasant affair, of which he was constantly reminded by the sight of his friend's intended antagonist.

Florence, who missed Wentworth's companionship, and whose thoughts were elsewhere, felt lonely, and was silent and *distraite*.

As for poor Silverdale, the idea of the duel completely overcame him. He could neither eat, drink, nor converse. In vain did Florence, from motives of kindness, endeavour to draw him into conversation; in vain did he say to himself, "I will, like Childe Harold,

Make despair a smilingness assume:"

the all-absorbing subject would force itself upon him too vividly and constantly to admit of even momentary abstraction.

By the time that the gentlemen had joined the ladies in the drawing-room the ice had begun to thaw a little, and the conversation to be rather less formal.

Lady Seagrove and Mrs. Mumford were becoming confidential; Miss Trimmer had prevailed upon Mr. Simon Mumford to play a game of

chess; the two elder Misses Mumford had seated themselves at a table with their work, one occupied in making little jugs of knitted worsted to hold halfpence, and the other in stitching very small beads on to very small slips of perforated card, in the form of short moral sentences; while Miss Gertrude Mumford, although she was several times recommended by her sisters to take her work, chose to remain unemployed, and conversing with Florence; Mr. Silverdale sat down near a window, at some distance from the rest of the party, with a book in his hand, which he appeared to be studying intently; Mr. Mumford, senior, seeing that his presence was nowhere particularly required, took up a newspaper, the police reports, parliamentary debates, shocking accidents, and horrid murders, contained in the columns of which, combined with the narcotic influence of a luxurious arm-chair, soon soothed him into a profound slumber; Pemberton, whose elastic spirits had in some degree revived, placed himself so that he could converse with all the young ladies, and also command a view of the chess-board. He presently inquired of Miss Mumford if those were talismans or charms she was working?

"They are book marks, Mr. Pemberton," replied Miss Mumford, graciously. "I will give you one if you like. You may take your choice," she continued, handing him some she had completed, which were decorated with black, grey, brown, and drab-coloured ribands.

Florence suggested that some pink riband would make a pretty variety.

"*Couleur de rose?*" said Pemberton. "No; I'm sure that is a tint to which Miss Mumford has a particular aversion."

"You are quite right," answered the serious young lady. "Why do you smile, Miss Hamilton?"

"I wish I could persuade you to go to the review we were talking about at dinner, Miss Mumford," resumed Pemberton; "I am sure you would be pleased. You see the mere mention of it excites Miss Trimmer so much that she cannot keep her eyes or her attention on the chess-board."

"Mithter Pemberton, you mithtake," said Miss Trimmer, who wished to appear very "serious." "I wath thinking of nothing but my nectht move."

"Mr. Mumford will not have to think long of *his* next move," said Pemberton, "if you leave that knight where you are placing it."

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Trimmer.

"That you had better forget the real army, and look well at the mimic one."

"I thall do no thuth thing," she replied. "I have conthidered thith move deeply for the latht ten minutes."

"Now," said Pemberton, "mark what follows. By moving the knight, you leave the queen unguarded, and Mr. Mumford has taken her."

"Oh, my poor queen!" exclaimed Miss Trimmer, clasping her hands; "how could I looth you! I may now give up the game; but it wath quite an overthight. I wath not thinking when I plathed the pieth."

"How singular!" said Pemberton, "considering that you had meditated on the move deeply for ten minutes."

"Mithter Pemberton, I do with you would not make tho many impertinent remarkth," said Miss Trimmer.

"Do you not mean pertinent?" rejoined Pemberton, smiling. "The '*im*' was a slip of the tongue, of course."

Miss Trimmer pouted and turned her back to him.

"Shall we try another game?" said Mr. Simon Mumford.

Miss Gertrude timidly asked some question about the review. Pemberton answered her, and then observed:

"You should all go, if it was merely to see my friend Captain Wentworth, whom all the ladies are in love with in this part of the world; and you would soon be added to the number, for he is one of the handsomest fellows I ever saw."

The elder Misses Mumford looked at each other and then down upon their work, greatly shocked at the mention of falling in love, especially with an officer. Miss Gertrude had the boldness to inquire what day the review was to be, and to say that she should like to see it very much.

"Well, Silverdale," said Pemberton, "is there anything very amusing in that book? Ha! this *is* curious. A new method of reading! But first tell me, are you interested by what you have read?"

"Yes, to be sure," replied the poet, looking bewildered, and at a loss to know what he meant. "Why do you laugh?"

"Because," said Pemberton, still laughing,—"because you are holding the volume the wrong way upwards. Well, poets and geniuses never do anything like other people, and Silverdale is too unlike his fellow-creatures to condescend even to read as they do."

Florence, pitying the poet's confusion, called him to look at a large volume of Scripture prints, the only book in the room, with the exception of a heap of tracts.

Pemberton again glanced at the chess players. "His majesty is rather closely besieged there," said he, alluding to Miss Trimmer's king.

"Check," said Mr. Mumford.

"Oh, how cruelly you drive me about," exclaimed the lady; "you allow me no peath!"

"Yes, you have three pieces," said Pemberton,—"a king and two pawns."

"Oh, Mithter Pemberton, how you do perthecute me," sighed Miss Trimmer, in plaintive accents.

"Check mate," said Mr. Mumford.

"There, I've lotht another game," said Miss Trimmer, "and it ith all entirely your fault, Mithter Pemberton."

Mrs. Mumford now approached the group, remarking, with a long face, that the young people seemed to be growing quite noisy; which observation, and her presence, had the effect of immediately checking all gaiety.

Precisely at six o'clock the party were summoned to partake of tea, which it was the fashion of the house to serve in the dining-room, all the guests sitting formally round the table.

Silverdale, as soon as he had hastily swallowed a cup of coffee, rose to depart, pleading an engagement.

"What ith the matter with the poet, I wonder?" said Miss Trimmer,

when he was gone. "How piteouthly he looked at you, Florenth, ath he bid you good-by."

"I rejoice to see our friend so subdued and sorrowful," observed Mrs. Mumford. "It argues an humble, serious turn of mind. I have little doubt that Mr. Silverdale is going to attend evening service. We seldom miss the Tuesday and Thursday lectures."

"Have you heard the Reverend Josias Damper?" asked Miss Mumford of Florence; who said that she had not.

"We sit under him," said Miss Priscilla. "He preaches the sweetest truthes."

"Only his sermons are a little too long," said her youngest sister; "and he generally weeps at the end of them."

"It is quite beautiful to see how he is affected," said Miss Mumford, reprovingly; "and he seldom exceeds two hours and a quarter."

"I fear I shall be obliged to leave you early," said Pemberton, "as I also have an engagement."

"I regret that," said Mrs. Mumford. "I was going to request Miss Hamilton to sing us some hymns."

"It is a pity we should prevent you from going to church," said Lady Seagrove, who was very tired of the visit.

"Oh, no, we have given it up for this evening," said Mrs. Mumford, with a self-denying air. "We will, if you please, have half an hour's sacred music before our usual reading and prayers, and then I hear your young people and mine are proposing a walk."

As the evening was very fine, Florence, Miss Trimmer, and Adela, begged to walk home (a distance of about three miles) instead of returning in the carriage.

"By going about half a mile round," said Gertrude, "we can cross Sedgefield Common."

"Which is a very favourite walk of ours," said Florence.

"Let it be so, then," said Miss Mumford, who was just then mollified by a whispered request of Miss Trimmer's that she might one day accompany them to hear the Reverend Mr. Damper.

That young lady congratulated herself upon having made a most favourable impression upon all the Mumford family, including the impracticable Mr. Simon.

"The only son and heir of the Mumford property, such as it is," she said to herself, "might not, as a *pis aller*, be a very contemptible match, though not a grand one. At any rate, the more strings one has to one's bow—or, rather, the more beaux one has to one's string—the better; and I flatter myself I have already a great many to mine."

Gertrude kept close to Florence's side during the walk, and, after exchanging their ideas upon several subjects, their conversation turned upon religion.

"I often lament," Gertrude presently observed, hesitatingly, "that I am so much less religious than my mother and sisters and their friends. You heard Abigail intimate just now, after the reading, that Mr. Damper does not consider me one of the Lord's people. Indeed—indeed, I am often very unhappy!"

"Dear Gertrude," said Florence, "I believe from what I know of you, and from what you have told me of your opinions, that you are far more really religious than those who condemn you. I cannot think that the

sincere followers of a creed, whose very essence is love, would be so unkind and so uncharitable. It seems to me that in this world everything sterling, whether material or immaterial, has its counterfeit. There is the true coin and the base, the real and the false diamond. Genius has its imitations; so—more than all—has religion. And I fully believe that the class of proud self-righteous people, who have sacred names constantly on their lips, who speak lightly and in common conversation of things which the angels look upon with awe and reverence, who profane Scripture—I think the term is not too strong—by the revolting familiarity with which they quote it upon every occasion, do more harm to the cause of religion than avowed Deists and infidels. And in proportion to our veneration for the true thing, will be our contempt and dislike to its counterfeit; as the physician who has the greatest respect for the science he studies, will feel the strongest indignation against quackery. I have observed that with the most truly religious, professions and frequent allusions to the subject are generally avoided. It is so with our deepest earthly feelings; for are not our best, our profoundest, our tenderest thoughts those which we keep secret within the depths of our own hearts, or at least those which we most seldom breathe to others, and then only when we feel secure of sympathy and interest?"

"I feel the truth of what you say, dear Florence," said Gertrude, "and you have made me feel happier. You do not, I think, agree with those who consider it wicked to read any but religious books?"

"I do not," said Florence. "I think that a really superior work of imagination may be read now and then, not only innocently, but with advantage. Neither am I of opinion that those authors do the most good who are continually enforcing the first truths of religion. We learn these from our Bibles, and are fully persuaded of them in our own minds. We seek, in the works of those authors who possess a knowledge of the world and of the human heart, to learn how characters, placed in various circumstances, such as might occur in every-day life, act under the influence or in the absence of such principles; and thus we are amused and instructed at once. An author, in books of this nature, no less than an individual in his daily life, may, by an occasional word or thought, impress others more strongly with his earnest faith and deep religious feelings, than he can by the most laboured arguments and vehement protestations."

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CUSHION DANCE.

MEANWHILE, Mistress Nutter having made her excuses to Lady Assheton for not attending the supper, walked down the hall with her daughter, until such time as the dancing and pastimes should commence. As will be readily supposed, under the circumstances, this part of the entertainment was distasteful to both of them, but it could not be avoided without entering into explanations, which Mistress Nutter was unwilling to make; and she, therefore, counselled her daughter to act in all respects as if she were still Alizon Device, and in no way connected with her.

"I shall take an early opportunity of announcing my intention to adopt you," she said, "and then you can act differently. Meantime, keep near me as much as you can. Say little to Dorothy or Richard Assheton, and prepare to retire early, for this noisy and riotous assemblage is not much to my taste, and I care not how soon I quit it."

Alizon assented to what was said, and stole a timid glance towards Richard and Dorothy; but the latter, who alone perceived it, instantly averted her head, in such way as to make it evident she wished to shun her regards. Slight as it was, this circumstance occasioned Alizon much pain, for she could not conceive how she had offended her new-made friend, and it was some relief to encounter a party of acquaintances who had risen from the lower table at her approach, though they did not presume to address her while she was with Mistress Nutter, but waited respectfully at a little distance. Alizon, however, flew towards them.

"Ah, Susan!—ah, Nancy!" she cried, taking the hand of each; "how glad I am to see you here; and you, too, Lawrence Blackrod—and you, Phil Rawson—and you, also, good Master Harrop. How happy you all look!"

"An wi' good reason, sweet Alizon," replied Blackrod. "Boh we began to be afeerd we'd lost ye, an that wad ha' bin a sore mishap, to lose our May Queen—an th' prottiest May Queen os ever dawnced i' this ha', or i' onny other ha' i' Lankyshiar."

"We ha' drunk your health, sweet Alizon," added Phil; "an wishin' ye may be os happy os ye desarve, wi' the mon o' your heart, if onny sich lucky chap there be."

"Thank you—thank you both," replied Alizon, blushing; "and in return I cannot wish you better fortune, Philip, than to be united to the good girl near you, for I know her kindly disposition so well, that I am sure she will make you happy."

"Ey'm satisfied on't myself," replied Rawson; "an ey hope ere long she'll be missus o' a little cot i' Bowland Forest, an that yo'll pay us a visit, Alizon, an see an judge fo' yourself how happy we be. Nance win make a rare forester's wife."

"Not a bit better than my Sukey," cried Lawrence Blackrod. "Ye shanna get th' start o' me, Phil, fo' by th' mess! the very same day os sees yo wedded to Nancy Holt shan find me united to Sukey Worsley. And so Alizon win ha' two cottages i' Bowland Forest to visit i'stead o' one."

"And well pleased I shall be to visit them both," she rejoined.

At this moment Mistress Nutter came up.

"My good friends," she said, "as you appear to take so much interest in Alizon, you may be glad to learn that it is my intention to adopt her as a daughter, having no child of my own, and though her position henceforth will be very different from what it has been, I am sure she will never forget her old friends."

"Never, indeed, never!" cried Alizon, earnestly.

"This is good news, indeed," cried Sampson Harrop, joyfully, while the others joined in his exclamation. "We all rejoice in Alizon's good fortune, and think she richly deserves it. For my own part, I was always sure she would have rare luck, but I did not expect such luck as this."

"What's to become o' me?" cried Jennet, coming from behind a chair, where she had hitherto concealed herself.

"I will always take care of you," replied Alizon, stooping, and kissing her.

"Do not promise more than you may be able to perform, Alizon," observed Mistress Nutter, coldly, and regarding the little girl with a look of disgust; "an ill-favoured little creature, with the Demdike eyes."

"And as ill-tempered as she is ill-favoured," rejoined Sampson Harrop; "and though she cannot help being ugly, she might help being malicious."

Jennet gave him a bitter look.

"You do her injustice, Master Harrop," said Alizon. "Poor little Jennet is quick-tempered, but not malevolent."

"Ey con hate weel if ey conna love," replied Jennet, "an con recollect injuries if ey forget kindnesses. Boh dunna trouble yourself about me, sister. Ey dunna envy ye your luck. Ey dunna want to be adopted by a granddame. Ey'm content os ey am. Boh are na ye gettin' on raythor too fast, lass? Mother's consent has to be axed, ey suppose, efore ye leave her?"

"There is little fear of her refusal," observed Mistress Nutter.

"Ey dunna knoa that," rejoined Jennet. "If she were to refuse, it wadna surprise me."

"Nothing spiteful she could do would surprise me," remarked Harrop. "But how are you likely to know what your mother will think and do, you forward little hussy?"

"Ey judge fro' circumstances," replied the little girl. "Mother has

often said she conna weel spare Alizon. An mayhap Mistress Nutter may knoa that she con be very obstinate when she tays a whim into her head."

"I *do* know it," replied Mistress Nutter; "and, from my experience of her temper in former days, I should be loth to have you near me, who seem to inherit her obstinacy."

"Wi' sich misgivings ey wonder ye wish to tak Alizon, madam," said Jennet, "fo' she's os much o' her mother about her os me, onny she dunna choose to show it."

"Peace, thou mischievous urchin," cried Mistress Nutter, losing all patience.

"Shall I take her away?" said Harrop, seizing her hand.

"Ay, do," said Mistress Nutter.

"No, no, let her stay," cried Alizon, quickly; "I shall be miserable if she goes."

"Oh, ey'm quite ready to go," said Jennet, "fo' ey care little fo' sich seets os this; boh efore ey leave ey wad fain say a few words to Mester Potts, whom ey see yonder."

"What can you want with him, Jennet?" cried Alizon, in surprise.

"Onny to tell him what brother Jem is gone to Pendle fo' toneet," replied the little girl, with a significant and malicious look at Mistress Nutter.

"Ha!" muttered the lady. "There is more malice in this little wasp than I thought. But I must rob it of its sting."

And while thus communing with herself, she fixed a searching look on Jennet, and then raising her hand quickly, waved it in her face.

"Oh!" cried the little girl, falling suddenly backwards.

"What's the matter?" demanded Alizon, flying to her.

"Ey dunna reetly knoa," replied Jennet.

"She's seized with a sudden faintness," said Harrop. "Better she should go home then at once. I'll find somebody to take her."

"Neaw, neaw, ey'n sit down here," said Jennet; "ey shan be better soon."

"Come along, Alizon," said Mistress Nutter, apparently unconcerned at the circumstance.

Having confided the little girl, who was now recovered from the shock, to the care of Nancy Holt, Alizon followed her mother.

At this moment, Sir Ralph, who had quitted the supper-table, clapped his hands loudly, thus giving the signal to the minstrels, who, having repaired to the gallery, now struck up a merry tune, and instantly the whole hall was in motion. Snatching up his wand, Sampson Harrop hurried after Alizon, beseeching her to return with him, and join a procession about to be formed by the revellers, and, of course, as May Queen, and the most important personage in it, she could not refuse. Very short space sufficed the morris-dancers to find their partners; Robin Hood and the foresters got into their places; the hobby-horse curveted and capered; Friar Tuck resumed his drolleries; and even Jack Roby was so far recovered as to be able to get on his legs, though he could not walk very steadily. Marshalled by the gentleman-usher, and headed by Robin Hood and the May Queen, the procession marched round the hall, the minstrels playing merrily the while, and then drew up before the upper table, where a brief oration was pronounced by Sir

Ralph. A shout that made the rafters ring again followed the address, after which a couranto was called for by the host, who taking Mistress Nicholas Assheton by the hand, led her into the body of the hall, whither he was speedily followed by the other guests, who had found partners in like manner.

Before relating how the ball was opened, a word must be bestowed upon Mistress Nicholas Assheton, whom I have neglected nearly as much as she was neglected by her unworthy spouse, and I therefore hasten to repair the injustice, by declaring that she was a very amiable and very charming woman, and danced delightfully. And recollect, ladies, these were dancing days—I mean days when knowledge of figures as well as skill was required, more than twenty forgotten dances being in vogue, the very names of which may surprise you as I recapitulate them. There was the passamezzo, a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, who used to foot it merrily, when, as you are told by Gray—

> The great Lord-keeper led the brawls,
> And seals and maces danced before him!—

the grave pavane, likewise a favourite with the Virgin Queen, and which I should like to see supersede the eternal polka at Almack's and elsewhere, and in which—

> Five was the number of the music's feet
> Which still the dance did with five paces meet;

the couranto, with its "current traverses," "sliding passages," and solemn tune, wherein, according to Sir John Davies,—

> —that dancer greatest praise hath won
> Who with best order can all order shun;

the lavolta, also delineated by the same knowing hand,—

> Where arm in arm two dancers are entwined,
> And whirl themselves with strict embracements bound,
> And still their feet an anapest do sound.

Is not this very much like a waltz? Yes, ladies, you have been dancing the lavolta of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries without being aware of it. But there was another waltz still older, called the sauteuse, which I suspect answered to your favourite polka. Then there were brawls, galliards, paspys, sarabands, country-dances of various figures, cushion-dances (another dance I long to see revived), kissing-dances, and rounds, any of which are better than the objectionable polka. Thus you will see that there was infinite variety at least at the period under consideration, and that you have rather retrograded than advanced in the saltatory art. But to return to the ball.

Mistress Nicholas Assheton, I have said, excelled in the graceful accomplishment of dancing, and that was probably the reason why she had been selected for the couranto by Sir Ralph, who knew the value of a good partner. By many persons she was accounted the handsomest woman in the room, and in dignity of carriage she was certainly unrivalled. This was precisely what Sir Ralph required, and having executed a few "current traverses and sliding passages" with her, with a gravity and stateliness worthy of Sir Christopher Hatton himself, when graced by the hand of his sovereign mistress, he conducted her, amid the hushed admiration of the beholders, to a seat. Still the dance

continued with unabated spirit; all those engaged in it running up and down, or "turning and winding with unlooked-for change." Alizon's hand had been claimed by Richard Assheton, and next to the stately host and his dignified partner, they came in for the largest share of admiration and attention; and if the untutored girl fell short of the accomplished dame in precision and skill, she made up for the want of them in natural grace and freedom of movement, for the display of which the couranto, with its frequent and impromptu changes, afforded ample opportunity. Even Sir Ralph was struck with her extreme gracefulness, and pointed her out to Mistress Nicholas, who, unenvying and amiable, joined heartily in his praises. Overhearing what was said, Mistress Nutter thought it a fitting opportunity to announce her intention of adopting the young girl; and though Sir Ralph seemed a good deal surprised at the suddenness of the declaration, he raised no objection to the plan; but, on the contrary, applauded it. But another person, by no means disposed to regard it in an equally favourable light, became acquainted with the intelligence at the same time. This was Master Potts, who instantly set his wits at work to discover its import. Ever on the alert, his little eyes, sharp as needles, had detected Jennet amongst the rustic company, and he now made his way towards her, resolved, by dint of cross-questioning and otherwise, to extract all the information he possibly could from her.

The dance over, Richard and his partner wandered towards a more retired part of the hall.

"Why does your sister shun me?" inquired Alizon, with a look of great distress. "What can I have done to offend her? Whenever I regard her she averts her head, and as I approached her just now, she moved away, making it evident she designed to avoid me. If I could think myself in any way different from what I was this morning, when she treated me with such unbounded confidence and kindness, or accuse myself of any offence towards her, even in thought, I could understand it; but as it is, her present coldness appears inexplicable and unreasonable, and gives me great pain. I would not forfeit her regard for worlds, and therefore beseech you to tell me what I have done amiss, that I may endeavour to repair it."

"You have done nothing—nothing whatever, sweet girl," replied Richard. "It is only caprice on Dorothy's part, and except that it distresses you, her conduct, which you justly call 'unreasonable,' does not deserve a moment's serious consideration."

"Oh, no, you cannot deceive me thus," cried Alizon. "She is too kind—too well-judging, to be capricious. Something must have occurred to make her change her opinion of me, though what it is I cannot conjecture. I have gained much to-day—more than I had any right to expect—but if I have forfeited the good opinion of your sister, the loss of her friendship will counterbalance all the rest."

"But you have not lost it, Alizon," replied Richard, earnestly. "Dorothy has got some strange notions into her head, which only require to be combated. She does not like Mistress Nutter, and is piqued and displeased by the extraordinary interest which that lady displays towards you. That is all."

"But why should she not like Mistress Nutter?" inquired Alizon.

"Nay, there is no accounting for fancies," returned Richard, with a

faint smile. "I do not attempt to defend her, but simply offer the only excuse in my power for her conduct."

"I am concerned to hear it," said Alizon, sadly, "because henceforth I shall be so intimately connected with Mistress Nutter, that this estrangement, which I hoped arose only from some trivial cause, and merely required a little explanation to be set aside, may become widened and lasting. Owing everything to Mistress Nutter, I must espouse her cause, and if your sister likes her not, she likes me not in consequence, and therefore we must continue divided. But surely her dislike is of very recent date, and cannot have any strong hold upon her; for, when she and Mistress Nutter met this morning, a very different feeling seemed to animate her."

"So, indeed, it did," replied Richard, visibly embarrassed and distressed. "And since you have made me acquainted with the new tie and interests you have formed, I can only regret alluding to the circumstance."

"That you may not misunderstand me," said Alizon, "I will explain the extent of my obligations to Mistress Nutter, and then you will perceive how much I am bounden to her. Childless herself, greatly interested in me, and feeling for my unfortunate situation, with infinite goodness of heart she has declared her intention of removing me from all chance of baneful influence from the family with whom I have been heretofore connected, by adopting me as her daughter."

"I should indeed rejoice at this," said Richard, "were it not that——"

And he stopped, gazing anxiously at her.

"Were not what?" cried Alizon, alarmed by his looks. "What do you mean?"

"Do not press me further," he rejoined; "I cannot answer you. Indeed, I have said too much already."

"You have said too much or too little," cried Alizon. "Speak, I implore you. What mean these dark hints which you throw out, and which, like shadows, elude all attempts to grasp them! Do not keep me in this state of suspense and agitation. Your looks speak more than your words. Oh, give your thoughts utterance!"

"I cannot," replied Richard. "I do not believe what I have heard, and, therefore, will not repeat it. It would only increase the mischief. But, oh! tell me this! Was it, indeed, to remove you from the baneful influence of Elizabeth Device that Mistress Nutter adopted you?"

"Other motives may have swayed her, and I have said they did so," replied Alizon; "but that wish, no doubt, had great weight with her. Nay, notwithstanding her abhorrence of the family, she has kindly consented to use her best endeavours to preserve little Jennet from further ill, as well as to reclaim poor misguided Elizabeth herself."

"Oh! what a weight you have taken from my heart," cried Richard, joyfully. "I will tell Dorothy what you say, and it will at once remove all her doubts and suspicions. She will now be the same to you as ever, and to Mistress Nutter."

"I will not ask you what those doubts and suspicions were, since you so confidently promise me this, which is all I desire," replied Alizon, smiling; "but any unfavourable opinions entertained of Mistress Nutter are wholly undeserved. Poor lady! she has endured many severe trials

and sufferings, and whenever you learn the whole of her history, she will, I am sure, have your sincere sympathy."

"You have certainly produced a complete revolution in my feelings towards her," said Richard, "and I shall not be easy till I have made a like convert of Dorothy."

At this moment a loud clapping of hands was heard, and Nicholas was seen marching towards the centre of the hall, preceded by the minstrels, who had descended for the purpose from the gallery, and bearing in his arms a large red velvet cushion. As soon as the dancers had formed a wide circle round him, a very lively tune called "Joan Sanderson," from which the dance, about to be executed, sometimes received its name, was struck up, and the squire, after a few preliminary flourishes, set down the cushion, and gave chase to Dame Tetlow, who, threading her way rapidly through the ring, contrived to elude him. This chase, accompanied by music, excited shouts of laughter on all hands, and no one knew which most to admire—the eagerness of the squire, or the dexterity of the lissom dame in avoiding him.

Exhausted at length, and baffled in his quest, Nicholas came to a halt before Tom the Piper, and, taking up the cushion, thus preferred his complaint: "This dance it can no further go—no further go."

Whereupon the piper chanted in reply,—"I pray you, good sir, why say you so,—why say you so?"

Amidst general laughter the squire tenderly and touchingly responded —"Because Dame Tetlow will not come to,—will not come to."

Whereupon Tom the Piper, waxing furious, blew a shrill whistle, accompanied by an encouraging rattle of the tambourine, and enforcing the mandate by two or three energetic stamps on the floor, delivered himself in this fashion: "She *must* come to, and she SHALL come to. And she must come, whether she will or no."

Upon this, two of the prettiest female morris-dancers, taking each a hand of the blushing and over-heated Dame Tetlow—for she had found the chase rather warm work—led her forward; while the squire advancing, very gallantly placed the cushion upon the ground before her, and as she knelt down upon it, bestowed a smacking kiss upon her lips. This ceremony being performed amidst much tittering and flustering, accompanied by many knowing looks, and some expressed wishes among the swains, who hoped that their turn might come next, Dame Tetlow arose, and the squire seizing her hand, they began to whisk round in a sort of jig, singing merrily as they danced—

"Prinkum prankum is a fine dance,
And we shall go dance it once again!
Once again,
And we shall go dance it once again!"

And they made good the words too, for on coming to a stop, Dame Tetlow snatched up the cushion and ran in search of the squire, who, retreating among the surrounding damsels, made sad havoc among them, scarcely leaving a pretty pair of lips unvisited. Oh, Nicholas! Nicholas! I am thoroughly ashamed of you, and regret becoming your historian. You get me into an infinitude of scrapes. But there is a rod in pickle for you, sir, which shall be used with good effect presently. Tired of such an unprofitable quest, Dame Tetlow came to a sudden halt, addressed the piper as Nicholas had addressed him, and receiving a like answer,

summoned the delinquent to come forward, but as he knelt down on the cushion, instead of receiving the anticipated salute, he got a sound box on the ears, the dame, actuated probably by some feeling of jealousy, taking advantage of the favourable opportunity afforded her of avenging herself. No one could refrain from laughing at this unexpected turn in affairs, and Nicholas, to do him justice, took it in excellent part, and laughed louder than the rest. Springing to his feet, he snatched the kiss denied him by the spirited dame, and led her to obtain some refreshment at the lower table, of which they both stood in need, while the cushion being appropriated by other couples, other boxes on the ear and kisses were interchanged, leading to an infinitude of merriment.

Long before this Master Potts had found his way to Jennet, and as he drew near, affecting to notice her for the first time, he made some remarks upon her not looking very well.

"'Deed, an ey'm nah varry weel," replied the little girl; "boh ey knoa who ey han to thonk fo' my ailment."

"Your sister, most probably," suggested the attorney. "It must be very vexatious to see her so much noticed, and be yourself so much neglected—very vexatious, indeed—I quite feel for you."

"Ey dunna want your feelin'," replied Jennet, nettled by the remark; "boh it wasna my sister os made me ill."

"Who was it, then, my little dear?" said Potts.

"Dunna 'dear me,' retorted Jennet; "yo're too ceevil by half, os the lamb said to the wolf. Boh sin ye mun knoa, it wur Mistress Nutter."

"Aha! very good—I mean—very bad," cried Potts. "What did Mistress Nutter do to you, my little dear? Don't be afraid of telling me. If I can do anything for you I shall be very happy. Speak out, and don't be afraid."

"Nay fo' shure, ey'm nah afeerd," returned Jennet. "Boh whot mays ye so inqueesitive? Ye want to get summat out'n me, ey con see that plain enough, an os ye stand there glenting at me wi' your sly little een, ye look loike an owd fox ready to snap up a chicken o' th' furst opportunity."

"Your comparison is not very flattering, Jennet," replied Potts; "but I pass it by for the sake of its cleverness. You are a sharp child, Jennet—a very sharp child. I remarked that from the first moment I saw you. But in regard to Mistress Nutter, she seems a very nice lady—and must be a very kind lady, since she has made up her mind to adopt your sister. Not that I am surprised at her determination, for really Alizon is so superior—so unlike——"

"Me, ye wad say," interrupted Jennet. "Dunna be afeerd to speak out, sir."

"No, no," replied Potts; "on the contrary, there's a very great likeness between you. I saw you were sisters at once. I don't know which is the cleverest or prettiest—but perhaps you are the sharpest. Yes, you are the sharpest, undoubtedly, Jennet. If I wished to adopt any one, which, unfortunately, I'm not in a condition to do, having only bachelors' chambers in Chancery-lane, it should be you. But I can put you in a way of making your fortune, Jennet, and that's the next best thing to adopting you. Indeed, it's much better in my case."

"May my fortune!" cried the little girl, pricking up her ears, "ey should loike to knoa how ye wad contrive that."

"I'll show you how, directly, Jennet," returned Potts. "Pay particular attention to what I say, and think it over carefully when you are by yourself. You are quite aware that there is a great talk about witches in these parts; and, I may speak it without offence to you, your own family come under the charge. There is your grandmother Demdike, for instance, a notorious witch—your mother, Dame Device, suspected—your brother James suspected."

"Weel, sir," cried Jennet, eyeing him sharply, "what does all this suspicion tend to?"

"You shall hear, my little dear," returned Potts. "It would not surprise me if every one of your family, including yourself, should be arrested, shut up in Lancaster Castle, and burnt for witches!"

"Alack-a-day! an this ye ca' makin' my fortin," cried Jennet, derisively. "Much obleeged to ye, sir, boh ey'd leefer be without the luck."

"Listen to me," pursued Potts, chuckling, "and I will point out to you a way of escaping the general fate of your family—not merely of escaping it, but of acquiring a large reward. And that is by giving evidence against them—by telling all you know—you understand—eh?"

"Yeigh, ey think ey *do* onderstond," replied Jennet, sullenly. "An so this is your grand scheme, eh, sir?"

"This is my scheme, Jennet," said Potts, "and a notable scheme it is, my little lass. Think it over. You're an admissible and indeed a desirable witness; for our sagacious sovereign has expressly observed that 'bairns' (I believe you call children 'bairns' in Lancashire, Jennet? Your uncouth dialect very much resembles the Scottish language, in which our learned monarch writes as well as speaks)—'bairns,' says he, 'or wives, or never so defamed persons may of our law serve for sufficient witnesses and proofs; for who but witches can be proofs, and so witnesses of the doings of witches.'"

"Boh ey am neaw witch, ey tell ye, mon," cried Jennet, angrily.

"But you're a witch's bairn, my little lassy," replied Potts, "and that's just as bad, and you'll grow up to be a witch in due time—that is, if your career be not cut short. I'm sure you must have witnessed some strange things when you visited your grandmother at MalkinTower—that, if I mistake not, is the name of her abode?—and a fearful and witch-like name it is,—you must have heard frequent mutterings and curses, spells, charms, and diabolical incantations—beheld strange and monstrous visions—listened to threats uttered against people who have afterwards perished unaccountably."

"Ey've heerd an seen nowt o't sort," replied Jennet; "boh ey han heerd my mother threaten yo."

"Ah, indeed," cried Potts, forcing a laugh, but looking rather blank afterwards; "and how did she threaten me, Jennet, eh? But no matter. Let that pass for the moment. As I was saying, you must have seen mysterious proceedings both at Malkin Tower and your own house. A black gentleman with a club foot must visit you occasionally, and your mother must now and then—say once a week—take a fancy to riding on a broomstick. Are you quite sure you have never ridden on one yourself, Jennet, and got whisked up the chimney without being aware of it? It's the common witch conveyance, and said to be very expeditious and agreeable—but I can't vouch for it myself—ha, ha! Pos-

sibly—though you are rather young—but possibly, I say, you may have attended a witch's sabbath, and seen a huge He-Goat, with four horns on his head, and a large tail, seated in the midst of a large circle of devoted admirers. If you have seen this, and can recollect the names and faces of the assembly, it would be highly important."

"When ey see it, ey shanna forget it," replied Jennet. "Boh ey am nah quit so familiar wi' Owd Scrat as yo seem to suppose."

"Has it ever occurred to you that Alizon might be addicted to these practices?" pursued Potts, "and that she obtained her extraordinary and otherwise unaccountable beauty by some magical process—some charm—some diabolical unguent prepared, as the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seals, the singularly learned Lord Bacon, declares, from fat of unbaptised babes, compounded with henbane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, and other terrible ingredients. She could not be so beautiful without some such aid."

"That shows how little yo knoa about it," replied Jennet. "Alizon is os good as she's protty, and dunna yo think to wheedle me into sayin' out agen her, fo' yo winna do it. Ey'd dee raythor than harm a hure o' her heaod."

"Very praiseworthy indeed, my little dear," replied Potts, ironically. "I honour you for your sisterly affection; but, notwithstanding all this, I cannot help thinking she has bewitched Mistress Nutter."

"Licker, Mistress Nutter has bewitched her," replied Jennet.

"Then you think Mistress Nutter is a witch, eh?" cried Potts, eagerly.

"Ey'st neaw tell ye what ey think, mon," rejoined Jennet, doggedly.

"But hear me," cried Potts; "I have my own suspicions also, nay, more than suspicions."

"If ye're shure, yo dunna want me," said Jennet.

"But I want a witness," pursued Potts, "and if you'll serve as one—"

"Whot'll ye gi' me?" said Jennet.

"Whatever you like," rejoined Potts. "Only name the sum. So you can prove the practice of witchcraft against Mistress Nutter—eh?"

Jennet nodded. "Wad ye loike to knoa why brother Jem is gone to Pendle to-neet?" she said.

"Very much indeed," replied Potts, drawing still nearer to her. "Very much indeed."

The little girl was about to speak, but on a sudden a sharp convulsion agitated her frame; her utterance totally failed her; and she fell back in the seat insensible.

Very much startled, Potts flew in search of some restorative, and on doing so, he perceived Mistress Nutter moving away from this part of the hall.

"She has done it," he cried. "A piece of witchcraft before my very eyes. Has she killed the child? No; she breathes, and her pulse beats, though faintly. She is only in a swoon, but a deep and deathlike one. It would be useless to attempt to revive her; she must come to in her own way, or at the pleasure of the wicked woman who has thrown her into this condition. I have now an assured witness in this girl. But I must keep watch upon Mistress Nutter's further movements."

And he walked cautiously after her.

As Richard had anticipated, his explanation was perfectly satisfactory

to Dorothy, and the young lady, who had suffered greatly from the restraint she had imposed upon herself, flew to Alizon, and poured forth excuses, which were as readily accepted as they were freely made. They were instantly as great friends as before, and their brief estrangement only seemed to make them dearer to each other. Dorothy could not forgive herself, and Alizon assured her there was nothing to be forgiven, and so they took hands upon it, and promised to forget all that had passed. Richard stood by, delighted with the change, and wrapped in the contemplation of the object of his love, who, thus engaged, seemed to him more beautiful than he had ever beheld her.

Towards the close of the evening, while all three were still together, Nicholas came up and took Richard aside. The squire looked flushed; and there was an undefined expression of alarm in his countenance.

"What is the matter?" inquired Richard, dreading to hear of some new calamity.

"Have you not noticed it, Dick?" said Nicholas, in a hollow tone. "The portrait is gone."

"What portrait?" exclaimed Richard, forgetting the previous circumstances.

"The portrait of Isole de Heton," returned Nicholas, becoming more sepulchral in his accents as he proceeded; "it has vanished from the wall. See and believe."

"Who has taken it down?" cried Richard, remarking that the picture had certainly disappeared.

"No mortal hand," replied Nicholas. "It has come down of itself. I knew what would happen, Dick. I told you the fair votaress gave me the *clin d'œil*—the wink. You would not believe me then—and now you see your mistake."

"I see nothing but the bare wall," said Richard.

"But you will see something anon, Dick," rejoined Nicholas, with a hollow laugh, and in a dismally deep tone. "You will see Isole herself. I was foolhardy enough to invite her to dance the brawl with me. She smiled her assent, and winked at me thus—very significantly, I protest to you—and she will be as good as her word."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Richard.

"Absurd, sayest thou—thou art an infidel and believest nothing, Dick," cried Nicholas. "Dost thou not see that the picture is gone? She will be here presently. Ha! the brawl is called for—the very dance I invited her to. She must be in the room now. I will go in search of her. Look out, Dick. Thou wilt behold a sight presently shall make thine hair stand on end."

And he moved away with a rapid but uncertain step.

"The potent wine has confused his brain," said Richard. "I mus see that no mischance befalls him."

And waving his hand to his sister, he followed the squire, who moved on, staring inquisitively into the countenance of every pretty damsel he encountered.

Time had flown fleetly with Dorothy and Alizon, who, occupied with each other, had taken little note of its progress, and were surprised to find how quickly the hours had gone by. Meanwhile, several dances had been performed; a Morisco, in which all the May-day revellers took part, with the exception of the queen herself, who, notwithstanding the

united entreaties of Robin Hood and her gentleman-usher, could not be prevailed upon to join it: a trenchmore, a sort of long country-dance, extending from top to bottom of the hall, and in which the whole of the rustics stood up: a galliard, confined to the more important guests, and in which both Alizon and Dorothy were included, the former dancing of course with Richard, and the latter with one of her cousins, young Joseph Robinson: and a jig, quite promiscuous and unexclusive, and not the less merry on that account. In this way, what with the dances, which were of some duration, the trenchmore alone occupying more than an hour, and the necessary breathing time between them, it was on the stroke of ten without anybody being aware of it. Now this, though a very early hour for a modern party, being about the time when the first guest would arrive, was a very late one even in fashionable assemblages at the period in question, and the guests began to think of retiring, when the brawl intended to wind up the entertainment was called. The highest animation still prevailed throughout the company, for the generous host had taken care that the intervals between the dances should be well filled up with refreshments, and large bowls of spiced wines, with burnt oranges and crabs floating in them, were placed on the side-table and liberally dispensed to all applicants. Thus all seem destined to be brought to a happy conclusion.

Throughout the evening Alizon had been closely watched by Mistress Nutter, who remarked, with feelings akin to jealousy and distrust, the marked predilection exhibited by her for Richard and Dorothy Assheton, as well as her inattention to her own expressed injunctions in remaining constantly near them. Though secretly displeased by this, she put a calm face upon it, and neither remonstrated by word or look. Thus Alizon, feeling encouraged in the course she had adopted, and prompted by her inclinations, soon forgot the interdiction she had received. Mistress Nutter even went so far in her duplicity as to promise Dorothy that Alizon should pay her an early visit at Middleton, though inwardly resolving no such visit should ever take place. However, she now received the proposal very graciously, and made Alizon quite happy in acceding to it.

"I would fain have her go back with me to Middleton when I return," said Dorothy, "but I fear you would not like to part with your newly-adopted daughter so soon; neither would it be quite fair to rob you of her. But I shall hold you to your promise of an early visit."

Mistress Nutter replied by a bland smile, and then observed to Alizon that it was time for them to retire, and that she had stayed on her account far later than she intended—a mark of consideration duly appreciated by Alizon. Farewells for the night were then exchanged between the two girls, and Alizon looked round to bid adieu to Richard; but, unfortunately, at this very juncture he was engaged in pursuit of Nicholas. Before quitting the hall she made inquiries after Jennet, and receiving for answer that she was still in the hall, but had fallen asleep in a chair at one corner of the side-table, and could not be wakened, she instantly flew thither, and tried to rouse her, but in vain, when Mistress Nutter coming up the next moment, merely touched her brow, and the little girl opened her eyes, and gazed about her with a bewildered look.

"She is unused to these late hours, poor child," said Alizon. "Some one must be found to take her home."

"You need not go far in search of a convoy," said Potts, who had been hovering about, and now stepped up; "I am going to the Dragon myself, and shall be happy to take charge of her."

"You are over-officious, sir," rejoined Mistress Nutter, coldly. "When we need your assistance we will ask it. My own servant, Simon Blackadder, will see her safely home."

And, at a sign from her, a tall fellow, with a dark, scowling countenance, came from among the other serving-men, and, receiving his instructions from his mistress, seized Jennet's hand, and strode off with her. During all this time Mistress Nutter kept her eyes steadily fixed on the little girl, who spoke not a word, nor replied even by a gesture to Alizon's affectionate good night, retaining her dazed look to the moment of quitting the hall.

"I never saw her thus before," said Alizon. "What can be the matter with her?"

"I think I could tell you," rejoined Potts, glancing maliciously and significantly at Mistress Nutter.

The lady darted an ireful and piercing look at him, which seemed to produce much the same consequences as those experienced by Jennet, for his visage instantly elongated, and he sank back in a chair.

"Oh, dear!" he cried, putting his hand to his head; "I'm struck all of a heap. I feel a sudden qualm—a giddiness—a sort of don't-know-howishness. Ho, there! some aqua-vitæ—or imperial water—or cinnamon water, or whatever reviving cordial may be at hand. I feel very ill—very ill indeed—oh dear!"

While his requirements were attended to, Mistress Nutter moved away with her daughter, but they had not proceeded far, when they encountered Richard, who, having fortunately descried them, came up to say good night.

The brawl, meanwhile, had commenced, and the dancers were whirling round giddily in every direction, somewhat like the couples in a grand polka, danced after a very boisterous, romping, and extravagant fashion.

"Who is Nicholas dancing with?" asked Mistress Nutter, suddenly.

"Is he dancing with any one?" rejoined Richard, looking amidst the crowd.

"Do you not see her?" said Mistress Nutter; "a very beautiful woman with flashing eyes; they move so quickly, that I can scarce discern her features; but she is habited like a nun."

"Like a nun!" cried Richard, his blood growing chill in his veins. 'Tis she indeed, then! Where is he?"

"Yonder, yonder, whirling madly round," replied Mistress Nutter.

"I see him now," said Richard; "but he is alone. He has lost his wits to dance in that strange manner by himself. How wild, too, is his gaze."

"I tell you he is dancing with a very beautiful woman in the habit of a nun," said Mistress Nutter. "Strange I should never have remarked her before. No one in the room is to be compared with her in loveliness—not even Alizon. Her eyes seem to flash fire, and she bounds like the wild roe."

"Does she resemble the portrait of Isole de Heton?" asked Richard, shuddering.

"She does—she does," replied Mistress Nutter. "See! she whirls past us now."

"I can see no one but Nicholas," cried Richard.

"Nor I," added Alizon, who shared in the young man's alarm.

"Are you sure you behold that figure?" said Richard, drawing Mistress Nutter aside, and breathing the words in her ear. "If so, it is a phantom—or he is in the power of the fiend. He was rash enough to invite that wicked votaress, Isole de Heton, condemned, it is said, to penal fires for her earthly enormities, to dance with him, and she has come."

"Ha!" exclaimed Mistress Nutter.

"She will whirl him round till he expires," cried Richard; "I must free him at all hazards."

"Stay," said Mistress Nutter; "it is I who have been deceived. Now I look again, I see that Nicholas is alone."

"But the nun's dress—the wondrous beauty—the flashing eyes!" cried Richard. "You described Isole exactly."

"It was mere fancy," said Mistress Nutter. "I had just been looking at her portrait, and it dwelt on my mind, and created the image."

"The portrait is gone," cried Richard, pointing to the empty wall.

Mistress Nutter looked confounded.

And, without a word more, she took Alizon, who was full of alarm and astonishment, by the arm, and hurried her out of the hall.

As they disappeared, the young man flew towards Nicholas, whose extraordinary proceedings had excited general amazement. The other dancers had moved out of the way, so that free space was left for his mad gyrations. Greatly scandalised by the exhibition, which he looked upon as the effect of intoxication, Sir Ralph called loudly to him to stop, but e paid no attention to the summons, but whirled on with momently-ncreasing velocity, oversetting old Adam Whitworth, Gregory, and Dickon, who severally ventured to place themselves in his path, to enforce their master's injunctions, until at last, just as Richard reached him, he uttered a loud cry, and fell to the ground insensible. By Sir Ralph's command he was instantly lifted up and transported to his own chamber.

This unexpected and extraordinary incident put an end to the ball, and the whole of the guests, after taking a respectful and grateful leave of the host, departed—not in "most admired" disorder, but full of wonder. By most persons the squire's "fantastical vagaries," as they were termed, were traced to the vast quantity of wine he had drunk, but a few others shook their heads, and said he was evidently bewitched, and that Mother Chattox and Nance Redferne were at the bottom of it. As to the portrait of Isole de Heton, it was found under the table, and it was said that Nicholas himself had pulled it down; but this he obstinately denied, when afterwards taken to task for his indecorous behaviour; and to his dying day he asserted, and believed, that he had danced the brawl with Isole de Heton. "And never," he would say, "had mortal man such a partner."

From that night the two portraits in the banqueting-hall were regarded with great awe by the inmates of the abbey.

A LOVE CHASE.

BEING THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

> One of those forms which flit by us, when we
> Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
> And oh! the loveliness at times we see
> In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
> The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree
> In many a nameless being we retrace,
> Whose course and home we know not, nor shall know,
> Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.
>
> Byron.

This paper is the second which I have selected from the numbers that have been forwarded to me by various members of the Brotherhood, and, in introducing it to the reader, I think it well to observe that I have every reason to believe the circumstances occurred just as they are described.

Some years ago, early one fine morning in the month of July, I was standing at the end of a small jetty on the north-east coast of Scotland, anxiously looking out seaward for the appearance of a steamer bound from the Shetland Isles, which was expected to touch at the place of my sojourn, on her way to Leith.

Through a far-spreading bank of dark clouds the red sun was slowly emerging; a deep haze hung upon the horizon, save where the bright rays fringed with a border of light the lower part of the murky curtain, and danced in golden joyousness upon the heaving ocean. There was nothing in sight over the wide wavy waste, save a few scattered small craft returning from the fishing-ground some twenty miles away, rising and falling in the trough of the sea, and appearing to the eye of imagination like things of life gambolling on their element beneath the first smiles of the glorious orb of day. A heavy swell was breaking upon the bar, huge rolling waves succeeding each other with uniform rapidity, and at times one that might be called a father of waves, or huge leader of a following multitude, would, with foamy crest, roll on in majestic motion, and with a roar like distant thunder strike against the jetty, casting the feathery spray some fifty feet in the air, to fall again in beauteous particles like white blossoms, or the scatterings of a snowy wreath. As the first homeward-bound fishing-boat neared the shore, I watched with much interest the management of the little craft amidst the troubled waters. It evidently required not a little skill to escape swamping, yet the crew, by their unconcerned looks, might have been riding upon the smooth waters of the Tay. Under the guidance of the weather-beaten coxswain who stood at the helm, backing water to avoid the rollers, they awaited the oncoming wave, then, riding gallantly on its crest, were carried bravely over the bar.

Boat succeeded boat, the wives and daughters of their crews anxiously awaiting their return, when the duties of this branch of the lords of the creation cease, and their better halves commence their division of labour. Some rare bonnie lassies, too, there were among them, paddling with their naked feet in the roll of the sea, unloading the boats, washing

the fish, and packing and conveying them in enormous loads upon their backs.

Whilst I was contemplating this busy scene, word was brought to me that the steamer whose coming I was awaiting was in sight. I looked seaward, but could not make her out.

"There she is, sir, coming out of that fog-bank, right under the sun," said a Dirk Hatterick-like fisherman, who, in a canvas petticoat, blue jacket, pearl button laced, boots covering his knees, and a sou'-wester on his shaggy black hair, stood near me. "She won't be inside the bar for more than an hour," he added, as he withdrew his hand from pointing out the just discernible vessel, with the smoke of her funnel marked like a serpent on the sky.

A small black object, not much bigger than my hand, she appeared, and feeling assured it would be full the time stated by the son of the sea ere it arrived, I began to take into consideration the policy of breakfasting in the interim, the probability being that that important part of the day's duty (especially previous to a sea voyage) would be numbered with the things of the past on the vessel's arrival. Thanks to the bracing sea breeze, I made an excellent breakfast at my inn, and on again proceeding to the jetty, found the vessel for which I had been waiting, riding proudly on the high swelling waters, within fifty yards of the shore. She appeared to have a goodly number of passengers on board; amongst them a large proportion were of the gentler sex, which, in the event of a fair passage, it was but reasonable to presume might prove highly agreeable. I was soon on deck, and in a very little time after we cleared out of the harbour. Amongst the male passengers, I was struck with the appearance of a great number attired in black suits and white neckerchiefs. A dry, sanctimonious look, which they one and all possessed, led me to infer that they were ministers of the Scotch Kirk, which supposition I afterwards found was correct, and also that they were on their way from the northern isles to attend the General Assembly at Edinburgh, the major part of the ladies on board accompanying them. Of the latter and most interesting part of my fellow-voyagers, my attention was early attracted by the features of one near me, who, at the moment of my first observing her, was arranging her veil, and with another lady at her side engaged in conversation with two individuals of the opposite sex. The first glance impressed me with the conviction that her countenance was one of the most beautiful that I had ever seen. Most men's imaginations have pictured to their mind's eye, at times, their highest conceptions of female loveliness. In these dreams of the beautiful, I must confess that my most glowing picturings were far surpassed by the living loveliness before me. It was the very countenance of Dubufe's picture of Eve, so loving and lovely I could not keep my eyes away from her. To a dreamer, it would not have been very difficult to imagine she had stepped from the canvas of that great French master, leaving Adam behind her, and having troubled some fashionable milliner for a few outward habiliments, was taking a voyage by way of variety. But, dreaming apart, my whole being was entranced by the youth, the bloom, the beauty I beheld. The intentness of my gaze seemed to disconcert the fair being I looked upon, for, hastily drawing down her veil, she shrouded from my view what I instinctively felt was the future sun of my existence.

From the listless and indifferent manner of the two individuals with

whom the ladies I have alluded to were engaged in conversation, I concluded they were their brothers; and yet there was a great difference in their general appearance, which I could not well reconcile with that supposition. They had little the appearance of gentlemen, being slovenly in dress, and displaying an absence of taste in their attire, which made a striking contrast between themselves and the elegant appearance of their companions.

By the time these observations were made the steamer had gained a good offing; the breeze was, however, increasing, and the sea getting up very fast—indeed, it became tolerably evident to all on board that there was a smart gale in store for us.

Darker and darker became the sky around, a deep humid light revealing itself where the sun struggled with the black clouds which seemed to overwhelm it; and then the overpowered orb disappearing, as though its vanishing had been the signal for the outset of battle, on came the furious gale bursting upon us in all the strength of untrammelled fury. The noble vessel could scarcely hold her own;—all hands were obliged to hold hard as the sea came sweeping wave after wave over the crowded decks. We were soon ordered below; some, however, would stay and take all chances, and amongst these were the two brothers, as I had conjectured them to be, of the ladies alluded to. On going below, I regretted, when too late, that I had not remained on deck also, as the close confined air of the cabin quickly disturbed the equanimity of my stomach; and, indeed, I soon became as sick and ill as any of the many sufferers around me. I observed that, in the hurry of going below, several ladies had entered the gentlemen's cabin; and whilst I lay suffering all the horrors of sea-sickness, in one of these I recognised the fair being with whose surpassing charms I had been so much struck on deck. She was lying on a couch, apparently a great sufferer; and during a violent fit of sickness her head had fallen from the cushion on which it had been resting, hanging down by the couch in a most painful and distressing manner, she being evidently too much exhausted to raise her head without assistance.

The vessel was pitching awfully, and so, indeed, was my interior, but feeling that my gallantry was at stake, I did not hesitate to proceed to the suffering beauty's relief. This, however, was not a very easy task, although the distance was short, for the lurching of the steamer, and my maintaining my perpendicular, seemed very incompatible, and I found myself more than once, whilst making the attempt, unpleasantly prostrated on the anatomy of some sick and groaning piece of humanity lying in an opposite direction. Eventually, however, I reached the fair unknown, and had the intense satisfaction of raising her drooping and lovely head to the pillow from which it had fallen. Can I ever forget the smile that greeted my attention to her? Never! Theme fitting for a poet's pen. It went through and through me; yet, oh horror! though not poetic, too true, at that interesting moment the sea-sickness came on again, and I had barely time to turn my head away from the angelic look I had received, when, alas!—— But I will not particularise more than the steward growled like a bear, a half-muttered curse escaped me at my mishap, and yet, like a gleam of sunshine on a stormy sea, that sweet angelic smile, amidst my sufferings, still shed its magic radiance upon me.

With some difficulty I regained my couch, and sweet amidst my sufferings was the reflection that the little service I had rendered had met with

so highly a gratifying return. I was certainly most unmistakeably ill, and yet experienced a delightful sensation of happiness whilst gazing on the fair being whose beauty, so bewitching, had created within me a feeling quite new—in fact, I felt, for the first time in my life, that I was deeply in love. Yes, at last I had experienced that divine inspiration, the gentle passion that poets sing of, heroes fight for, and—and—I was very sick—sick unto death. How it happened I know not, but in spite of the conflicting emotions of a first love and a first sea-sickness, I eventually fell asleep. What length of time my interview with the drowsy god lasted I cannot remember, but my last recollection was that of hearing a deep impressive voice engaged in reading.

On opening my eyes, I was not a little astonished in beholding the cabin filled with strange people, all on their knees, and an elderly grey-haired man, the deep tones of whose voice had awakened me, addressing them from the holy volume. The storm was raging fearfully without, and it seemed that the steerage passengers had been summoned into the cabin for the purpose of joining in religious service together. Ere I could well comprehend what it was all about, the reader had finished the chapter. My attention was, moreover, attracted from the minister by the fair object of my thoughts, who was kneeling with the others, her luxuriant locks falling beautifully dishevelled over her shoulders, her face pale as death, yet bearing an expression of heavenly resignation, as though she expected and was prepared for the last dread farewell—the adieu for ever and ever. I would not be deemed irreverent, but must confess that whilst gazing upon the pure, holy, and resigned expression of her countenance, the thought, nay the wish was mine, that if in the inscrutable decrees of Providence it had been decreed that we were to be wrecked and lost, with her I might descend into the depths of the deep green sea.

In the midst of my reverie, I observed the scowling gaze of one of the steerage passengers, a hard-featured Scotch peasant, fixed intently upon me. For a moment I was at a loss to understand why I was honoured with so large a share of his attention, and a look so significant, but it soon occurred to me that I was reclining on my couch, whilst all the rest were devoutly kneeling. The Scotch, as is well known, are very rigid and jealous in their religious observances, and the very serious-looking passenger no doubt regarded me as little better than a second Jonah. After a short pause, the elderly minister was succeeded by one of his younger brethren, who began to pray with great earnestness for our deliverance. To me, however, his words were as incomprehensible as an unknown tongue. A Highlander's English is always puzzling enough, but that of a Shetlander from the Orkneys is, to an unpractised southern, so much of a jargon, that there would be some reason in one suggesting to such a speaker, as did the Irishman, under similar circumstances, the experiment of talking backwards, to afford a possibility of the words being understood.

With his deep Norse pronunciation the young minister continued praying for some time, displaying a degree of excited fervour, and wildness of gesticulation, that to me was distressing to witness. However, the painful scene at length drew to a close, the good ship had weathered the storm, and about midnight we ran into the Forth, anchoring off Leith, thanking Providence for our escape, and our arrival once more in tranquil waters. Next morning I was up betimes, and on deck, gazing

on the noble panorama which, under the most favourable of aspects, was spread before me. From the battlements of the east, over which the sun had just risen, came streaming a flood of golden sunshine far and away on the quivering waters of the Forth. Above us lay the romantic island of Inchcolm, with its picturesque monastic ruins, standing forth in strong and beautiful relief against the wide smiling span of the morning sky. Below us lay the island of Inchkeith, and in the extreme distance the Bass Rock and North Berwick Law revealed themselves, rearing their crests through the slight haze which yet hovered around them. A scene of animation surrounded us: the storm-driven barks of yesterday were clearing out from the haven that had afforded them shelter, and, spreading their canvas to a sou'-west breeze, were scudding swiftly and gracefully away over the sparkling waters. On our left loomed Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags; and nearer still, the bright sunshine glittered on the vanes, towers, monuments, and castle of the finest city in her Majesty's dominions—the city of Edinburgh, the modern Athens.

Whilst I was engaged in admiring the scene which I have attempted to describe, a light footstep approached the part of the vessel where I was standing. I turned my head. It was my angel of yesterday. She came to thank me for what she was pleased to term my kindness to her on the preceding day; and the reader will readily imagine that, however much the presence of the idol of my thoughts affected me, I did not let the opportunity escape to continue a conversation so charmingly commenced. The hours, under the first and ever-exhilirating smiles of young day, the scene, and the circumstance, gave to the conversation a zest, a delight, which I had never experienced before, and I was soon sensible that, surprisingly beautiful as were her features, she possessed a mind and disposition equally beautiful, and in their combination irresistible.

To a cultivated intellect, tinged with just enough romance—for what in the regions of twenty is man or woman who possesses not a little of it?—my fair companion added a keen perception of the ridiculous; and, as our conversation, branching from the subject of the glorious picture spread before us, reverted again to the storm we had the day before encountered, I must confess that I felt anything but at ease, when, after describing with much pathos our critical position, she commenced giving me a description of myself as I appeared when working my passage up the cabin to her, meeting on my way, in my frequent departures from a true equilibrium, the unfortunate wretches who were lying right and left of my path, reminding her forcibly, she said, with my lugubrious frontispiece white as a table-napkin, of Harley in the "Illustrious Stranger," when he is about to be buried alive with the princess.

Our *tête-à-tête* had lasted about an hour—which I need scarcely say was one of the most rapidly fleeting hours of my life—when it occurred to me, with an apology for not having done so earlier, to inquire after her fair companion, whom I ventured at the same time to presume was her sister.

"The lady who is travelling with me is not my sister," she replied, "nor yet a relation."

"And the gentlemen?" I ventured to observe.

"One of them is my brother, and the other stands in the same position to the lady of whom you were inquiring."

I bowed; and for a few moments there was a pause. She doubtless

perceived that the information given had a little surprised me, and probably conceived that I regarded, as somewhat unusual, the circumstance of two brothers and two sisters of different families travelling together apart from a closer tie. The subject was changed; but after a little time I again returned to it, and learned that their party had been on a tour through Scotland and the Northern Isles.

"And are now returning home?" I ventured to observe, inquiringly.

"Oh dear, no," was the reply; "we first intend to spend a fortnight amongst the Cumberland Lakes."

"The Cumberland Lakes!" I formed a resolve on the instant, and without hesitation expressed the pleasure which that piece of intelligence had afforded me, as I was also on my way thither.

My fair companion gave me a look, which said pretty plainly she knew the reason why I was going. It was anything but a look of displeasure, although with it she simply replied, "Indeed!"

We chatted away until the time arrived to disembark. I was getting deeper and deeper into the meshes, and being anxious to become still more friendly, observed, that although we were talking like old acquaintance, I had yet not had the pleasure of knowing to whom I was indebted for such delightful companionship.

"Nor is it likely you ever will; for our acquaintance must end as it commenced."

This was said in so serious and impressive a manner, that I could not misinterpret her meaning, which was as painful to me as it was unexpected.

"Oh, do not tell me so!" I replied. "For the first time in my life I have met with one who has created feelings in my breast never before experienced, and, although our meeting was but yesterday, I feel as if I had known and loved you for years; do not, then, sound the knell to all my hopes, by saying that we must part—part as we met; I cannot think you regard me entirely as a stranger, and most earnestly do I wish to tell you who and what I am."

"You must not do anything of the kind," she exclaimed, earnestly, interrupting me; "I am not in a position to return your confidence."

"And why not?" I rejoined. "What is there to prevent your doing so?"

"A very particular reason," she responded; "I am engaged."

"Engaged!" I exclaimed, "in tones of disappointment and surprise. "Pray excuse the question, but may I venture to inquire if the gentleman you have so honoured is on board this vessel?"

"He is; the gentleman is the brother of my companion."

Phew! the mystery was out.

"And your fair companion is in the same position to the other gentleman, who has the honour to be your brother?"

"It is so," as I expected, my fair enslaver rejoined.

That she did not care a button for her intended I was quite confident, and therefore I hesitated not a moment in my reply.

"And you consider yourself engaged to that rough, ill-bred piece of humanity, snoring yet in the cabin? Now, listen to me."

"I will not listen to you any more; it is quite time we parted." And she turned, with a look somewhat of anger, to depart.

"Excuse me," I rejoined; "but one moment hear me. I see through this affair quite clearly; it is evidently nothing but a family arrangement,

in which your feelings have never been consulted. You have not an idea or sympathy in common with the object chosen for you; and, in fact, you regard him with perfect indifference; nay, listen but a little longer. I have within the last few moments resolved to follow you to the world's end, if necessary, but prevent such a sacrifice I will! You may behave coldly, nay, harshly, but my resolve will be unaltered; therefore it will be useless for you to endeavour to prevent me. For the present, let us be friends only, if you wish it. Calm yourself now; there are people coming on deck; and when we are parted, remember there is one interested in your welfare whose whole happiness is bound up in your own. I leave you here, and in three days hence shall meet you at Windermere. Good-by!"

I wished not for words; the expression of the soft hazel eyes that in our parting bade me farewell, was rich eloquence to me. And oh! what are words to the language of woman's eye when it beams eloquent with love?

In turning from the spot I encountered the scowling gaze of my fair one's intended and her brother, they having evidently been observing us. I passed them with all the hauteur I could command, and going on shore, soon after found myself ensconced in mine inn, the most excellent of quarters in Edinburgh.

My business which took me to the model city finished, the second morning after my arrival found me a passenger on her Majesty's mail going south, *viâ* "merry Carlisle," and on the evening of the third day I arrived at Bowness and its comfortable hostelrie the Crown. Here I learned that the parties I was in search of were sojourning under the same roof, and had gone out for a stroll a few minutes previous to my arrival. This I learned whilst engaged discussing my dinner; after which important affair, I drew up a chair to the window of the room in which I was located to enjoy the scene which it commanded.

The sun, with a glorious effulgence rarely seen in the south or west of England, was just setting; beneath me lay Windermere, that queen of lakes, and on its bright bosom lingered, as though 'twere pain to part, the slowly-departing sunlight in all the beauty of its gleaming gold. Here and there, dotting the tranquil waters of the lake, like fairy homes, little islands revealed themselves, shaded with trees, whose drooping stems seemed to bend to embrace and kiss the glittering waters that flowed beneath them! The broad disc of the sun now sinks below the horizon, the waters assume a deeper shade, gaunt shadows creep up the mountain's side, their peaks still radiant with light, and yon more distant sky-towering summit seems like a mass of burnished gold. The joyous laugh, mellowed by distance, at times from the bosom of the lake breaks upon the ear, the glittering splash of oars revealing in the shadowed water where the boats are returning with their light-hearted freights from the pleasure-excursions of the day. But the mountain crests of gold grow fainter and fainter still; sounds scarce heard ere lost; voices of unseen spirits hymning a vesper hymn, float past and are gone; the breeze whispers and swells like the gathering of clans; brighter and brighter beams the evening star; the last gleam of the glorious orb of day has faded from the loftiest mountain-top—it is night. My reverie, whilst contemplating the scene which I have endeavoured to describe, was broken by the sounds of a pianoforte, and soon after one of the waiters entered to inform me that coffee would be served in the drawing-room. Availing

myself of this piece of information, I proceeded to the place of gathering of the guests, and on entering the room the first pair of eyes which mine encountered were those of my rival. He appeared completely astounded at my presence, as did also my fair one's brother, who stood near him; the ladies, whom I also soon recognised, appeared to be very much taken up with a little private conversation, which was clearly of great moment, as they seemed to pay not the slightest attention to anybody or anything that was passing around them.

An elderly dowager was kind enough to take me, with others, under the shadow of her wing, dispensing Mocha and Hyson to a somewhat merry company, comprising the old and young seated at her table. After coffee, as is usual where visitors of both sexes congregate, music and a carpet quadrille followed, the younger portion of the company joining in the mazes of the dance, the elder ones deploying off to their favourite rubber, or remaining to dream of their past whilst watching the trippers on the light fantastic toe. The opportunities afforded me for speaking to the sole object of my thoughts were few, my intentions being evidently suspected, as the two gentlemen were on guard, exercising the utmost vigilance. After a little consideration, I concluded that I should be perfectly justified in speaking to my enchantress; and accordingly, to the no little astonishment of each Cerberus, I approached and addressed her. Seeing that she was embarrassed, though receiving me very kindly, and as I did not wish to have a scene in that particular locality, I purposely made the interview a short one, not omitting, however, to beg that she would as soon as possible afford me a chance of seeing her alone. And oh! how gratifying was it to me, in parting from that brief and delightful interview, to experience the slightest perceptible pressure of her hand. Slight as it was, it sent a glow through my whole frame, and a feeling of happiness to my heart, which those only can understand who have experienced the joy of loving, and feeling that they were loved again.

Dancing had no longer charms for me; music fell unheeded on my ear; and wishing to enjoy in silence my rapturous reflections, I wandered into the garden of the inn, where all was still, the air breathing perfume, and above, the deep blue vault of heaven glittering with its innumerable fires, and gemmed by a crescent moon. That night I retired to rest, my heart brimful of happiness; and, in the midst of most glorious castle-building, I sank into dreams of rapture.

In my pursuit of the beautiful, the next day found me in a skiff on the lake, where, after enjoying the various views which its broad bosom commands, at a certain hour I pulled for the shore, and passing the landing-place, turned a small headland into a quiet little bay, where, running the skiff's keel upon the shingles, I stepped on the shore, my repeater informing me, at the same time, that I was punctual to a moment.

Reader, this was a trysting spot; and I may now mention, that on the previous night, as I was returning to my room, on the staircase I was met by the maid whom I had observed attending upon my enslaver and her companion. She approached me with a very demure look, and, without uttering a word, threw a little three-cornered billet into the hollow of my candlestick, and passed on.

I was a little taken aback by the proceeding, but conjecturing, with a beat of the heart, from whence it came, had soon deciphered its contents, the signature to which was simply Helen. It is not requisite that I

should say more than that, although very brief, the perusal of that little note made me feel myself a very happy fellow, and strengthened my resolve more than ever, if necessary, to do battle in the fair writer's behalf. I need scarcely add that its contents had something to do with my excursion on the lake, and my appearance at a certain time at the spot I have described. Here I had not waited long when I was joined by the object of my every thought, who, with sweet confidence, accepted my proffered arm; and, oh! rapture! we rambled together on the romantic shores of Windermere.

"I am sure," said my former companion, "you must think my conduct very strange in sending you a note appointing this meeting. I should not have done so, had not my brother and his friend, since seeing you, arranged to go over to Lowood to-day; and, as I should in all probability not have another opportunity of seeing you alone, agreeable to your earnest request, I ventured on the impropriety; but this meeting must be our last."

"The last! Oh, you cannot, do not mean it!" I replied. "You know that I am deeply attached to you; let me add, that my future misery or happiness rests now entirely with you. That I am not altogether indifferent to you, you have shown me, and confessed, that were you but free, I might have entertained a hope that my suit would not be in vain. Let me, then, plead for your own freedom,—it may, it must be yours; the power is in your own hands. By all just laws, both human and divine, you are absolved from the ties by others forced upon you; and to be compelled to give your hand without your heart to one who is unworthy of your affections, and possesses barely your respect, would be treason to true love, and a cold sacrifice at the shrine of insensibility. Hear me, Helen; it must not, shall not be!"

For some little time my lovely companion was too much agitated to speak; at length, with much emotion, she replied,

"I fear that I have been foolish enough to give you cause to think that I have been but little consulted in an arrangement which is to me of such serious import; but,"—she paused for a moment, then resumed, with a voice faltering in its tones, "indeed,—indeed I am very unhappy, and scarce know what I say or do."

Her lovely head dropped; a deep sigh escaped her lips; whilst on the silken lashes of her eye hung a tear—the pearl-drop of her grief.

"My dear, dear Helen—for so I must call you," I replied, "there is an escape from this unhappy position. Listen: only consent to visit with me the residence of the blacksmith of Gretna, and in five hours hence we shall be over the border, and may laugh at your brother, and his friend also. Consent, dear girl, thus to be mine, and our mutual happiness is secured."

Oh, for the romance of two-and-twenty! Here was I offering to run away with a fair Hebe,—certainly of a most beautiful countenance and bewitching mien,—who a week before was a complete stranger to me; whose family I knew nothing about, entirely ignorant of her name, but who I believed possessed all that I could desire, and could love for ever and ever.

Happiness supreme! she consented to be mine. We arranged that after coffee the same evening she should plead indisposition, retire early, and, about ten o'clock, join me at the foot of the hill close to the village,

where I was to be stationed with a gig in readiness (a postchaise there was not then in the place) to take us to Ambleside, where we should be enabled to procure a chaise and four, and soon be beyond the reach of pursuit. We had arrived at this part of the arrangement of our plans, and Helen was about to tell me "everything," when—heaven and earth!—our conference was cut short by the sudden and dramatic appearance of the friend and brother, who very unexpectedly revealed themselves to our astonished eyes. The former, after contemplating us for a moment with a most strikingly unamiable expression of his heavy plebeian features, advanced, and, in an authoritative tone, demanded of me who I was, and who had introduced me to the lady by my side. I smiled contemptuously at the querist whilst replying by requesting him to tell me what business he had to make the inquiry. My coolness seemed somewat to stagger him, when the brother stepped in to the rescue, and, in a much more gentlemanly manner than I had anticipated, addressed me.

"Will you permit me, sir, to repeat the question; and, as I am the brother of this young lady, you will, I trust, allow that I have some right to inquire, particularly as I am well aware that you are but a recent acquaintance; and to me you are a complete stranger."

As I had expected something of this sort, I was not very much put out by the question. I replied that I was indebted for the acquaintanceship to accident alone. "This lady," I observed, "was in pain—nay, danger—from which I had the happiness to relieve her. Had her brother or friend been at the time paying the attention which from their hands she should have received, my interference would not have been called for."

"As her brother, I thank you, sir," was the reply. "But you will, I am sure, pardon my being so explicit on this subject, as to say that you will confer a favour upon the young lady's friends by ceasing your attentions to her."

"Indeed!" I replied, with an air of surprise. "I crave your pardon in return, but must observe, that as I take it the lady herself is the person most interested in this affair, whilst she honours me with her friendship, what her friends would like will to me be a matter of perfect indifference."

"If you have any pretensions to deserve the title of a man of honour," said the brother, when I had ceased speaking, "to that honour I now appeal. My sister, sir, is engaged, and, in seeking to continue further acquaintance with her, you would be interfering with family arrangements in a manner you little dream of."

"Probably so," I replied, still determined not to yield an inch; "but with such family arrangements I have nothing to do. My object is to study this lady's happiness, and, whilst acceptable to her, be assured the objection which you or any of her friends may entertain will not drive me from her, or induce me to yield a friendship which I so highly prize."

For a moment there was a pause; the brother then, with a look of severity, advanced, and offered his arm to his sister, which, with an expressive look at me, she accepted; then, turning from the spot in silence, the party left me to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.

"Well," I soliloquised, "our Gretna trip is stopped for the present; most unmistakeably knocked on the head; what is next to be done? Thus

ruminating, I regained my skiff, and stretched away once more over the calm waters of the lake, whose sweet tranquillity presented a strong contrast to my agitated feelings.

When I entered the breakfast-room of the hotel on the following morning, not one of the party in whom I was so much interested was present. A misgiving came over me; I instituted inquiries; my worst fears were realised: they had gone.

"Gone! how and where?" was my exclamation.

"Can't say where, sir," replied the waiter, "but a postchaise and four came from Ambleside and took them away early this morning."

"How early?—at what hour?" I inquired, eagerly.

"Four o'clock, sir."

I resolved on the instant to follow them.

In an hour's time after receiving the information of their sudden departure I was in Ambleside, waiting the arrival of the Whitehaven mail, on the outside of which I took a place, in pursuit of my captive Dulcinea.

Never before, but now did the scenery of the Lakes spread its witchery before me in vain. The Rydal Water, Grassmere Lake, Helvellyn, and Saddle Back, whose base we skirted—the town of Keswick, and the pride of Cumberland, the giant Skiddaw, rearing his towering crest before us—Derwentwater, too, and along the shores of Bassenthwaite Lake we passed—all oft admired, but now I saw them not. Helen alone filled my vision; and what are mountains and lakes compared to Nature's masterpiece—woman, lovely woman?

Towards evening we arrived at Whitehaven. My inquiries at the different places of changing horses on our route had elicited that I was on the right track, as I learned at each place that a chaise and four had preceded us. My own calculations on the likelihood of the route they would take had also considerably aided me in the pursuit. Whilst at Ambleside, waiting the arrival of the mail, and learning that the objects of my pursuit had proceeded north, I felt assured that they were not bound for Scotland; and as they had evidently made a final departure from the Lakes, I concluded they would make direct for Whitehaven, from which place a steamer, I was aware, would leave for Liverpool on the following morning.

On that steamer, the *Countess of Lonsdale*, the next day found me embarked. She had her awnings up, to shelter the passengers from the fierce rays of a July sun; a clarionet and violin were discoursing harmony as I entered the vessel; passengers were bidding adieu to their friends on the pier; there was much crowding, clamour, and confusion; the gun fired, the paddle-wheels began the rotatory, and, rounding the pier-head, the *Countess* made a graceful curtsey as she met the first roll of the sea from the Solway.

The great confusion on board for some little time prevented my approaching the part of the vessel where I soon discovered my enslaver and her friends seated. By them I had been unseen, and, as things settled down on deck, I slowly sauntered past them. Astonishment was depicted on the countenance of all save my enchantress, who seemed to take my appearance there as a matter of course. The brother bit his lip with ill-concealed vexation, the friend's sister could not restrain a laugh, whilst the friend, or in other words my rival himself, looked confusion doubly

confounded. I fancied I could hear him mutter, "Why, here's dat dam Monsieur Tonson come again."

Close by them I observed a middle-aged lady, belonging to that peculiar class of bipeds known as old maids. She had evidently, at an earlier period of her life, been tolerably good-looking, but her pinched, dried-up features, possessing a settled, vinegar-like sneer, rendered her countenance now anything but prepossessing.

I soon discovered that the movements of myself and the objects of my chase were engrossing her whole attention. With the quickness of her sex she had evidently discovered there was something in the wind, and was determined, if possible, to find it out. It was sometime ere I had an opportunity of speaking to my fair enslaver, and then we were almost immediately interrupted. The old maid was closely observing us, and Helen was far from being at her ease while under the basilisk eye of the vindictive-looking, animated, mummy-like piece of humanity. After the fair Helen had quitted me, every movement which I made to rejoin her was watched by this she-devil, who, with her sneering look, seemed thoroughly to comprehend how matters stood, and, as though in derision, smiled at my attempts to speak to her alone. She was a perfect incubus: were it not for her close attention, I felt assured Helen would have rejoined me. Irritated by her unfeeling surveillance, I returned her cat-like looks with interest. Heaven knows, I never before this time hated anything with a petticoat on; but she became to me like the old man of the mountain to Sinbad; her very presence was a dead weight upon me, and I began to think with what intense satisfaction to myself I could strangle or drown her. I was fortunate enough, however, to meet with the idol of my heart once again at a different part of the vessel to where the old she-dragon was stationed—a meeting which was not obtained without considerable tact on the part of my Helen—and oh! how delighted I felt that we had outmanœuvred the antiquated and curious old vixen at last. Leaning over the bulwarks of the steamer, I was very intently listening to the information which my fair companion was about to give me relative to her home, when we were both startled by a loud, sharp, and particularly emphatic "A-hem!" close behind us, and on turning round we found the old vixen, with her fiendish smile, and the eyes of a group of passengers fixed upon us.

Fortunately, almost at the same moment the attention of the gazers was diverted by the appearance in the river of an American liner, outward-bound, and as she passed close by us in full sail, created a diversion in our favour, which we took advantage of, by moving towards another part of the vessel. On our way thither, however, my unlucky star being still in the ascendant, we were met by my companion's fair friend, who smilingly bowed to me, then whispering to Helen, the latter excused herself for so abruptly leaving me, and they together disappeared below.

Soon after we entered the Mersey, and the passengers became busily engaged in preparing to go ashore. The tide was out, and as the admirable arrangements for landing of the present day were not then in existence, we were soon surrounded by boats containing ruffianly Irish porters and the ragamuffins of every description whose occupation was to infest the George's Pier-head, and completely take by storm each arriving steamer. The confusion was so great, that I was near losing my portmanteau overboard, but at last, eventually, with it I got into the boat which was to take the mail, naturally concluding that she would first reach the

shore. In this I was, however, mistaken; the party in whose movements I was so much interested had reached the pier before me, and I arrived but just in time to see the friend, the brother, and the two ladies take a coach at the stand and drive off. Into another I jumped as quick as possible.

"Follow that coach," said I to the driver; "follow it wherever it goes!"

"What, the yaller 'un, 1265."

"Ay, ay, be quick!"

"All right, sir."

The whip descended on the flanks of his horse, and away we rattled over the stones, as though the Jehu had a case of life and death in hand. On we sped—how the stones did rattle, to be sure, beneath the wheels—how the people in the streets did stare. I thought I was tolerably acquainted with the geography of Liverpool, but the boundary of my knowledge on that head, at the rate we were going, was soon passed. On, on we went, I occasionally looking out of the window to see that the "yaller" coach was still before us.

All was right—the wilderness of houses still continued; patches of green and juvenile-looking gardens next revealing themselves, bespeaking our approach to the suburbs of the town. Yet on we went, and I began to wonder when we should stop, and whether or not the occupants of the "yaller" coach had become aware that I was in pursuit behind. They probably know that I am in their wake, I thought, and the matter has resolved itself into an actual chase.

"Follow!" cried I to the driver, excited by the thought, again thrusting my head out of the window, with my eye on the "yaller" flyer before us. "Follow long as your horse can crawl."

I might have saved myself this energetic address to the whip, for the leading coach soon after stopped, and at the same time my vehicle pulled up close to the kerb-stone of rather a superior street which we had entered. The man had carried my instructions out to the letter, for he had not drawn the rein until the nose of his Rosinante touched the back of the "yaller" coach.

Rather too close, I thought, but out I jumped; the steps of the other vehicle were let down, when out came—oh, horror of horrors!—that infernal shrivelled piece of anatomy, the old maid of the steamer. I was thunderstruck, paralysed—death and the devil! I had too clearly followed the wrong coach. The animated mummy seemed not a little astonished at my advent on the spot; but at a glance she evidently comprehended all; my look of disappointment and surprise; and the she-lynx actually, with one of the most fiendish mocking expressions I ever beheld on the human frontispiece, laughed in my face.

Fire and fury, how she did laugh! Not a little enraged, I turned, and re-entered the coach.

"Where shall I drive to?" quoth the man.

"Drive to the d——l!" I growled out. "I mean—anywhere—to the Stork."

It was also too palpable I had been generalled out of my first love; and so it proved, for I never again beheld the fascinating Helen.

JOHN PRESTER.

I.

"LET cynics say what they like, this is a good sort of world enough after all, when people only know how to enjoy it properly."

Thus thought a young man of about five-and-twenty, seated in the best inn's best room at A——, a town in the eastern part of Cornwall; and certainly, to judge from appearances, he was exactly the sort of person, and placed in precisely the sort of circumstances, to warrant one's expecting him to indulge in such a sentiment. Though not regularly handsome, he was a fine, good-looking fellow, with a countenance which must prepossess every one in his favour, and of that kind which is often far more pleasing than more perfect features. As far as external circumstances were concerned, he was seated in an easy chair, before a comfortable fire, with the very best breakfast before him that the White Hart could produce; and that is not saying a little. People talk of the comfort-causing qualities of a good dinner; but what is called a good dinner, is, after all, but a heavy, lethargic, dyspeptic, apoplectic sort of an affair. You are led on insensibly from soup to fish, from fish to beef, mutton, game, tarts, puddings, fruit, and the Lord knows what all, until at last all faculty of thinking is destroyed, and you loll back in your chair with unbuttoned waistcoat, and go off into a doze or a discussion on politics. But a good breakfast is a very different sort of thing. You sit down to your coffee, chicken, ham, tongue, eggs, toast, muffins, &c., and after having done perfect justice to each and all of them, you arise at last, without a sense of repletion, like a giant refreshed—(by the way, if that said giant were not continually getting refreshed, he must have been worn down to a dwarf by this time, through constant use)—fit for anything that may be required of you.

No wonder, then, that the gentleman we have mentioned should have seemed pretty well contented. But, to a shrewd observer, there would have appeared to be something more than a good breakfast, or even inherent good temper, causing the particularly pleased expression of his countenance, as, after finishing his last cup of coffee, he leaned back in his chair, with the unread *Times* in his hand.

"Well, certainly," said he to himself, "the old proverb, 'True love never runs smooth,' has not hitherto been verified in my case. Everything, so far, has gone on well; the dear sweet girl herself has been all I could wish, and now I require nothing but her aunt's consent to make me the happiest of men. I wish she would make haste and give it me, though; not that I fear she will be cross; Emily describes her as kindness itself, and tells me she is sure she will not thwart her where her happiness is concerned. Besides, she can have no possible objection to me. My family is good—my present position in life tolerable—my prospects excellent—my appearance, without vanity, not displeasing—to say nothing of my love for Emily, or her affection for me. So what can she wish for more? To be sure, her reception of me, though polite enough, was somewhat distant; and I don't see why she might not have given her consent at once, as well as 'take time to consider, and let me know by letter.' But old ladies always deem it their bounden duty to

be as formal as possible on such occasions. Well, I wish she would make haste, that's all; and then soon shall I be able to call my sweet Emily my own. Dear, dear girl, how I love her! How I wish——"

"If you please, sir," said his servant, coming into the room, "here is a letter that has just been left for you, sir."

"Oh, very well, William, give it me. 'Charles Gerard, Esq., White Hart Hotel.' From the old lady, no doubt. That will do, William. Now, then," he continued, as the servant retired—"now, then, to know my fate." And, breaking the seal, he began to read.

Apparently, the contents were unexpected, and anything but pleasing. Surprise, vexation, grief, and rage, seemed to take possession of his countenance; and as he finished the letter, he crushed it in his hand, and dashing it on the ground, with something very like an oath, walked up and down the room with rapid strides. At length, words interwove with sighs (and now and then, we fear, something worse) found out their way.

"Confusion seize all aunts and cousins to the hundredth degree! Was there ever such a piece of unexpected ill-fortune? To think that this infernal fellow should turn up now, to dash the cup of happiness from my grasp, as it was almost touching my lips! Strange that I should never have heard of him before! But I will win her yet, in spite of all. What care I for her fortune? She would be as dear to me without a penny as with all the wealth of Golconda. Let her only be faithful to me, and she shall still be mine. But is she? Alas! even she, whom I believed so true—she for whom I would have sacrificed every prospect of my life, everything I possess, or ever hope to possess—even she has deserted me, and considers me but as dust in the balance compared with the loss of her wealth. But no—I cannot believe it: one so gentle, lovely, and good, never can have played me false. But I will not remain in this state of suspense. I will ride out at once, and from her own lips know my fate. And yet, I may be only exposing myself to fresh mortification. Besides, of what use can it be? She has told me herself that nothing should ever induce her to marry without the consent of her aunt, and that appears, at present, hopeless enough. If I could but see her alone now for a few moments, and no one be the wiser! But that is impossible; and if I call again, everybody will be saying that I could not take a first refusal, but was obliged to have a second, couched in somewhat stronger terms; with the embellishments, perhaps, that I was shown the door, or even kicked down stairs—something of the sort, no doubt. No, that will never do. Suppose I send my servant with a note, and let him wait about until he can give it her without anybody seeing him? The fellow is shrewd enough; but he is so full of his cursed self-conceit, and thinks so much of himself and his own interests, that he has no time to bestow a thought on anything else. No, I am afraid to trust him. Whatever shall I do, then? One thing is certain; until I hear from her own lips that she wishes our engagement to be over—and of that I have no fear—I never will resign her. But how, then, shall I act? I wish I had some one to consult with. If Frank Gray were only here now, his ingenuity, that has got me out of so many scrapes and difficulties at school and college, perhaps might assist me now. I've a great mind to run up to town and see him. Why not? I've nothing more to detain me here—yes, I'll set off this very evening."

And, like a person who had finally made up his mind, he rang the bell.

"William," said he, as his servant entered, "go in the course of the morning and pack up a few things for me. I'm going to town this evening, and don't think it likely I shall return to A——, at least, for some time; but as I don't exactly know what my movements may be for a week or two, I shall leave most of my luggage here. By-the-by, I don't suppose I shall want you; so you may as well stay here, too, until I send for you. Well, sir, what the deuce are you laughing at?"

"I beg pardon, sir—I really was not aware that I was doing so."

"My mistake then, I suppose. Just give me my hat. I don't know what to make of that fellow," he continued to himself, as he walked out. "I don't like his smile."

No wonder either that he didn't. And here we may as well give a short description of William's personal appearance. In figure he was somewhat below the ordinary height, and greatly below the ordinary width, his back being about as broad as that of a sixpenny fiddle. His feet and hands, of which he was especially vain, were small, and his fingers long, white, and delicate. Every rule has its exception, and Byron's theory on the subject is no exception to the rule. His forehead was, perhaps, a very good one as far as it went; but, unfortunately, there wasn't enough of it. His face was thin and pale, his eyes small and grey, and his hair long, light, and lank. He had no whiskers, but a strong indication of a moustache graced his upper lip, as if the world were not yet quite ripe for its appearance; but it held itself perfectly ready to come forward on any emergency.

The reader will gather from this that he could not be called particularly handsome; but, had he possessed the beauty and proportions of an Apollo or an Adonis, all would have been marred by the eternal smile that rested upon his features. Smiles may be divided into two genera—agreeable and disagreeable; which may be again subdivided into various species, one, of the most intensely unpleasant kind, being that of self-conceit, which seems to say, "I dare say, now, you think yourself a deuced killing fellow; but, do as you will, you know you never can hope to equal me." Or, "My dear sir, it really isn't worth while to argue with you, but you are taking a very superficial view of the case. Never mind. When you have seen as much of the world as I have you will know better." Another is the smile of dissimulation, which gives to the practised observer the certainty that its possessor, although speaking fairly to his face, is all the time seeking an opportunity to take advantage of him. We are thus prolix on the subject, as we wish the reader to imagine a smile compounded of these, and when he has realized this to his mind, he may form some faint notion of that which sat everlastingly on the face of the gentleman we are attempting to describe. Add to this a mincing gait, like that of a person treading amongst eggs, and a speech which, owing to his over-anxiety to speak correctly (an end, by the way, not always attained after all, though it was pretty well on the whole), bore a striking family likeness to the said gait, and you may form some idea of Augustus Mortimer, Esq., for such was the name he had given to Gerard when he entered his service, though the latter, who had no fancy for such high-sounding titles, had, greatly to his disgust, always called him plain William. As his master went out, his behaviour was, to say the least, peculiar. At first he stood opposite the pier-glass over the

mantelpiece, and appeared to be practising bows, &c. Not exactly practising, either, but rather as if he were admiring his own grace. Lifting ideal hats to imaginary ladies; going through the ceremony of introducing a supposititious gentleman on his right to a fictitious lady on his left, and so on. Then advancing close to the glass, he spent some time in examining minutely the physical condition and prospects in life of a diminutive pimple by the side of his nose, which formed one of the greatest torments of his existence, from the fear lest it might be an embryo wart. He then tried to open his master's writing-desk, but, finding it locked, went to the table, and consoled himself for his disappointment with a cup of coffee and a piece of toast, for the breakfast things had not yet been removed. At last, sinking into the easy chair, he began, as his master had done before him, to soliloquise.

"I wonder whatever it can be that has put my master (odious word, I have no patience with it) so much out of the way. I really do not think I ever saw him so much out of temper before. Upon my honour, I never saw such a silly fellow. He has no idea in the world of concealing his feelings. Everything shows itself upon his countenance just as it occurs to him. Besides, he quite spoils his features by allowing them to be twisted and turned by every thought that occurs to his occiput. If he only kept them under control he really would not be such a bad-looking fellow. But as it is—bah! But to be compelled to serve one so infinitely inferior to myself—ah, there's the indignity! To have to brush the clothes and to be at the beck and bidding of one whom I cannot help feeling to be of a baser mould! But this disgraceful servitude shall continue no longer. How fortunate that I shall now have time to complete my conquest! Let the fates be propitious, and soon shall Sally Binks be Mrs. Augustus Mortimer, and Mr. Augustus Mortimer his own master. To be sure, I wish it was a genteeler business than a chandler's; but of course she cannot imagine that I shall attend to the shop; she must do that—she knows more about it than I do. I wonder whatever it is, though, that makes Mr. Gerard go off to town in such haste. I thought he was come down to marry an heiress. Yet he has scarcely arrived before he hurries off again, and in a particularly bad humour too, to judge from his looks. I wish I could get a peep at that letter he had this morning; I have no doubt that that is at the bottom of it all. I dare say he has been behaving in some extraordinary way, or the lady has had the good taste to look for something a little more delicate and refined in a husband. If she had but seen me now, the thing would not be difficult to account for. Well, it will not do to spend all the morning here. I must go and pack up my gentleman's things, and get rid of him as soon as possible."

As, pursuant to this intention, he rose to leave the room, his eye fell upon a piece of paper, the corner of which was just peering out from under the tablecloth. He picked it up, and finding that it was the letter which Gerard had received that morning, and which he had, in the first impulse of his passion, thrown on the floor, and forgotten to pick up again, his habitual smile extended itself for once into an actual chuckle of delight. But instead of reading it immediately, he replaced it as he had found it—then, walking out to the top of the stairs, he looked to see that no one was coming, and, on re-entering the room, carefully placed the door a little ajar, so that he might hear an approaching footstep before

he was himself seen. He then went to the window, and cast a glance up and down the street, to make sure that his master was not returning; and having completed all these arrangements to his satisfaction, he once more took up the letter and read it. It ran as follows:

"Pencliff, Nov. 5th.

"Sir,—My niece and myself beg to return you our united thanks for your exceedingly flattering proposal; but I am sorry to be compelled to add that they cannot be, at least for the present, for a moment entertained. We have just received a letter from a place called Canada (somewhere in America) from Mr. John Prester, a nephew of mine, and cousin of Emily's, whom, until now, we had believed to have been drowned near there when quite a child, as he was coming to England with his parents, both of whom, as well as all the rest in the ship, were lost. Before this he had always been destined for Emily's future husband, and as he has now written to us to announce that he is alive, and intends paying us a visit, I have no doubt that the former wishes of the family will be carried out.

"It may perhaps tend in some measure to console you for your disappointment, to know that the greater part of her property is, by a provision of the will, by which it was left her, forfeit, should she refuse her cousin's hand. So that, you see, apart from old intentions and family regards, there is a strong reason why he should have the preference. At the same time, as we know nothing at all of him, or what his life has been from the time he was supposed to have been lost until now, we do not pledge ourselves that Emily shall marry him should he prove to be very unworthy of her; so, in that case, should the loss of her thirty thousand pounds make no difference to your feelings, you may still have a chance.

"I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

"Elizabeth Tremayne.

"P.S. Please don't mention this; we don't wish it known yet."

"So," said Mr. Mortimer, as, after having read the letter, he carefully refolded, or rather recrumpled it, precisely as it was before, and placed it in its former position, partly under the table—"so, this is the cause of all Mr. Gerard's vexation, is it? and a very sufficient cause too. No joke, indeed, to lose thirty thousand pounds, besides the feeling of being cut in that way. And so the girl herself seems to think very sensibly. Ha! ha! Neither she nor her aunt seems to care much for him by comparison. This Prester is a lucky fellow, though; a handsome fortune and a lovely girl to be had for the asking. Whatever could have been his reason for leaving it so long before making his existence known? He might have lost the whole. Stay, he may only lately have discovered who he is. Wrecked when quite a child—all papers and so on lost with him, no doubt—perhaps even now he may not know the good fortune that awaits him in England; perhaps he may change his mind, and not come at all; perhaps, even, he may be already married; perhaps—eh! what!—upon my soul it would not be a bad idea!" And, as if struck by a sudden thought, he once more carefully read the letter; then, with a look of intense abstraction, leaned with his arm on the mantelpiece, and remained for some time in deep thought,

broken only by occasional mutterings, such as, "'Lost when quite a child'—'Know nothing about him'—'Forfeit the greater part of her fortune,'" &c. "Yes," he said, at last, as he walked away from the mantelpiece, "as sure as I am born, I will do it. Why not? Everything seems to suit exactly. The intelligence that I have so fortunately got at they cannot suppose known to any one but Gerard, Prester, and themselves. Their never having seen Prester, nor heard anything at all of him, makes detection almost impossible. They will not dare to refuse and lose the money. Besides, she will be delighted to find her cousin so good-looking and agreeable. A good story, a few elegant compliments in my best style—she will make comparisons not particularly advantageous to Mr. G., and will be mine. Some ingenious excuses for getting the marriage over at once, and if Mr. Prester comes, he will find himself too late to claim the lady. If he should do so, and go to law for the money, I will oppose him; and should I even lose, there will be plenty left. Thirty thousand pounds is only the 'greater part of it'—ten thousand besides, at the very least, I daresay—more thousands than Sally Binks has scores. Sally Binks!—detestable name!—and a chandler!—faugh! The only difficulty would be if he should come before the marriage. Yes, that would be rather unpleasant—but, nothing risk, nothing win——I will try it. If he should come, I must brazen it out for the time, and run at the first opportunity. I shall, at all events, be no worse off than I was in my last adventure. But I will not think of that. None but the brave deserve the fair. I will do it—upon my honour I will do it."

II.

It was no wonder that Gerard, having once seen Emily Tremayne, should have fallen in love with her, or that, having once loved her, he should think that nothing but her own wish would induce him to resign her. She was indeed a sweet girl. A beautifully clear and delicate, yet rich, complexion; fair, open forehead; thick clustering brown hair; neck and shoulders white as snow, and exquisitely moulded; dark blue eyes, now soft and gentle, now arch and full of life—all these, with a graceful figure, just changing, like an opening bud (we can find a newer, but no better simile), from the slender form of the girl to the fuller proportions of the woman—all these constituted charms which might well have captivated a more obdurate heart than Charles Gerard's.

Left an orphan at an early age, she had been brought up by, and, except when at school, had almost constantly resided with, her aunt, Mrs. Tremayne, who doted on her, and who, by her excessive care and fondness for her niece, had been converted, as far as she was concerned, from a good-natured, simple-minded creature, to an actually scheming, designing, fidgety old lady. When Emily was at school, and away from her, she could never rest from the fear that something evil had befallen, or would befal her. Sometimes she would take it into her head that Emily was ill (though all the time in excellent health and spirits), and, notwithstanding the assurance to the contrary of the doctors, would insist on taking her away from school—greatly to her own mortification and chagrin, though she loved her aunt too well to show it—to consult Dr. A., or Dr. B., to take the benefit of sea-bathing, or something of the kind.

Sometimes she would have her home lest she should catch the small-pox or scarlet fever, which, though no one else had ever heard of it, she knew to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the school. In fact, her excessive care would have been purely ridiculous had not her sincerity and the fondness which formed her motive been so apparent.

Of late, however, since Emily's leaving school, she had gradually discovered how irksome these little fidgets were to the object of them, and, though they were not the less felt, she began to conceal them, and to use little underhand, roundabout schemes, not always, by the way, very well managed or very successful, to bring around the thing she wished, or to prevent those she dreaded. Notwithstanding all these little annoyances, the very love that prompted them prevented her thwarting her niece in anything on which her heart was really set, and in the matter of marriage in particular, as her own experience of the wedded life, long, long ago, though short and fleeting, had been bright and happy—the recollection of it, through a long vista of years, coming upon her mind with a pleasant, yet subdued and holy light, like the glad sunshine through the richly-stained windows of some old cathedral. In this matter, in particular, she was not likely to thwart her niece, where her happiness was concerned. And when, during a visit at the house of a mutual friend, Emily had seen Gerard, had heard his vows of affection, and given up her young heart to him, she felt quite sure, and told him so, that if he came down and spoke to her aunt, she would consent at once to their union. We have seen how he came, and how he prospered.

It was two or three evenings after Gerard's receipt of the letter we have mentioned in the last chapter, that Emily and her aunt were seated together in one of the most comfortable rooms of their very comfortable house, which was at a short distance from A——, the town we have already spoken of. It was a cold, bleak November evening, and as the wind sighed and howled amongst the trees outside, it made the snug parlour, with its cheerful fire, soft carpets, and warm-looking curtains, seem a perfect little paradise; and Emily would have passed very well for an angel in it, had it not been that a certain restlessness and uneasiness of manner seemed to betoken the presence of human cares and troubles. She placed herself at the piano, and tried to sing, but stopped abruptly in the midst of a verse. She began to play a lively air. It went very well for a few bars, but got gradually slower and slower, until it sounded much more like a dirge, and, at last, died away altogether. She tried to work, but did more mischief in ten minutes than she could repair again in an hour. She took up a book, but instead of looking into it, her bright eyes, dimmed with tears, peered over it into the fire beyond.

"My dear aunt," she said, at length, "you can't think how very—very uneasy this is making me. What can have become of Charles? I do wish you would tell me the very words of your answer to him. You say you were in every way pleased with him, and I am quite sure you would not wish to make me miserable; but why, then, isn't he come? Do tell me, aunt, what you said."

"My dear child," said the old lady, "I have already told you, that in my answer to his proposal I consulted only your happiness and welfare."

"But what, then, can have kept him? I am quite sure he must be ill."

"No, my dear," replied her aunt, kindly taking her by the hand, and pressing a kiss upon her forehead. "I fear that it is his heart that is bad, not himself. I am almost as sorry as you, for I had formed a better opinion of him."

"But why, aunt?" cried Emily, now fairly frightened. "What can make you think that? What can you mean? Quick—tell me."

"I will tell you, my darling, but you must compose yourself. Recollect that he may still be true, and if so, he will come yet. If not, he is unworthy of a thought. Now, pray, my dear girl, be calm. I cannot speak while you are like this."

"Go on, aunt; I am quite calm."

"Then sit closer to me, my dear. When Mr. Gerard called on me the other day to propose for your hand, I was, as I have told you, much pleased with him. His appearance and manner were prepossessing; and, above all, he seemed so sincere in his expressions of love for you, that it appeared almost impossible to doubt him. So far, Emily, I felt towards him as you yourself did, but with this important difference, that I was not in love, and, consequently, was able to recollect that words and appearances are often deceptive; and also to remember that more than thirty thousand pounds are not to be had every day with a wife, and that it was just possible that he was in love with your money and not with yourself. So, as you are aware, I did not accept his proposal at once, but told him I would write soon and give him my answer. After he was gone, I concocted a little plan to test his sincerity. Do you recollect your little cousin, John Prester, that was drowned some eighteen years ago?"

"Of course not, aunt; I was but twelve months old when he was drowned, and you know I never saw him."

"Well, you have heard that, had he lived, he was intended for your future husband; and you must know that your money was left you on condition of your marrying him, should he claim your hand?"

"Yes."

"Well, I wrote Gerard, telling him this, and adding that we had had a letter from America from your cousin, saying that he was not drowned after all, and that he was coming to pay us a visit, and that you would no doubt marry him, as, if you did not, you would have to forfeit nearly all your property. Now this, I think, was a capital plan, and you see how well it has answered. Had it been merely for your sake, without regard to money, that he wished to marry you, he would have come out as soon as he received the letter, and said so at once, for, to give him every chance, I added a line or two, saying that we did not pledge ourselves that you should marry your cousin. He would have told us that it was you and not your fortune he wanted; we should have undeceived him, and all would have gone well. But no; as soon as he had read the letter which said that if he took you it must be without your money, he seems to have given up all thought of you. Well, don't you think about him, he does not deserve it. Don't grieve, Emily."

"I do not grieve, aunt," said Emily, rising, "except that you should ever have written such a letter—that you should have descended to tell an untruth."

"Nonsense, child, you don't know what you are saying. Has it not succeeded? Has it not proved him to be false and faithless?"

"No, aunt; I am as confident of his faith as of my own. You have succeeded in nothing but making me appear base and dishonourable."

"Well, Emily, I won't be angry with you. But you will know better one day, and be thankful to your old aunt for keeping you from so much misery."

"No, aunt," replied Emily; "even if Charles were what you suppose him, I should never be pleased to think that you had told a falsehood for my sake."

"Nonsense, child; what stuff you talk! When you know it was only a little innocent trick to prove the truth or falsehood of the man who calls himself your lover. Besides, we don't know that it is altogether so false as you imagine. We are not certain that he was drowned. We only know that the ship sailed and was never heard of again. But your cousin may have been saved; and it is quite possible yet that he may return and claim your hand, in which case you must either marry him or forfeit, should he insist on it, your thirty thousand pounds."

"I declare," said Emily, "we quite deserve that he should come. But don't let us quarrel, aunt. Forgive me, if I have said anything to offend you."

"Well, my dear, I do, and you will know better one day. But here's John returned from A——," she continued, as an old servant entered the room with a parcel. "Well, John, have you brought the things from Mr. Moslyn's?"

"Iss, missus," said John; "here they be in this here parcel, all o' mun. And precious glad I be to get home, I can tell 'ee, for 'tis blowing mortal could outside."

John, by the way, was an odd mixture of shrewdness and simplicity, good sense and credulity. Without much wit or humour, he had sometimes an odd way of expressing himself that made people laugh without well knowing why. He had grown grey in his present service, and, like most old servants, had acquired a sort of familiar way of expressing himself to his mistress that to strangers would appear very odd and somewhat disrespectful. Sometimes, indeed, she herself would get out of all patience with him; but all her scoldings were received with such imperturbable and provoking coolness, that she would get at last into a towering passion; and more than a dozen times John had actually been paid his wages and discharged, but generally appeared again, a few hours after, with the tea or supper things, or something of the kind, because "he knowed missus couldn't get on without 'un." A statement which, as his reappearance was seldom very strongly questioned, there appears no great reason to doubt.

"And," continued his mistress, "I hope you have brought the ribands I told you of?"

"Here it is," replied John, "with the rest of the things. I've a brought some too for Sally Housemaid—she's a going to be married, you know. Tell 'ee what it is, missus: that there love is a great mistake that fortinate people finds out before marriage, and unfortinate ones a'terwards. I haint no patience wi' mun. Two geese fancying theirselves doves. A great goose Sally is for to leave a comfortable place for any sich purpose; but she's like the rest of mun."

"Well," said the old lady, speaking warmly and earnestly, "and I would fifty times rather be a goose, and married to a gander I loved, laying blessed little eggs, and hatching dear little ducks of goosechicks for him, than I would be an ostrich or an eagle living alone and desolate. That is," recollecting herself, and with a glance at Emily, "supposing the gander not to be an interested worldly gander that had married me for my money, which would be quite a different thing. Did you tell Mrs. Brown to call with the fish?"

"Iss, missus," replied John; "I tould her, but she didn't appear to take no notice whatsumever of what I was a saying."

"How was that, then, John?"

"Lor, missus! I don't know—I never ded see sich a set in all my born days as they there fish-women and apple-women be in town. When fust I comed into the market, I spoke to Cally Pendray—you knows fat Cally Pendray, what sells apples and nits?—'Well, Cally,' says I, 'how be to-day?' 'Ben't well at all, Mes John,' says she.—'What's the matter, then, Cally,' says I. 'Nasty, good-for-nothing people abusing of me, Mes John,' says she,—'saying things about me that I don't desarve. Cost me now a ha'penny more than it ought to in tay—been obliged to buy two pennord when I can't afford no more than dree ha'pord. I ben't strong, and the laystest little thing upsets me. Said I was scandalising people, they ded—nasty, good-for-nothing hussies!—me that never scandalised nobody in my life—I would scorn the haction. Said I was swearing and fighting, too, they ded, when I declares to gracious goodness I never swore a hoath in my life, and anybody that says I ever ded is a d—d liar for her pains. I can't abear it, Mes John; I don't like it at all, saying things about me that I don't desarve.' Well, missus, I seed there wasn't much to be got out of she, so I goes over to Mrs. Brown, that you tould me to speak to about the fish. 'Well, Mrs. Brown,' says I, 'how be selling your turbot to-day?' 'Sex a penny, sir,' says she. 'Nasty stinking things, going about the town telling everybody that I was drunk; she'd better hould her tongue about me, I can tell her, or I'll put the marks of my ten fingers in her face, I knows.'—'What's the matter, Mrs. Brown?' says I. 'Why, that there Cally Pendray, sir,' says she, 'has been going all about saying that I was drunk. There isn't a wus woman in the town than she is. Drunk, sir,—drunk she said I was—me that was home very bad in bed wi' dree doctors a 'tending of me,—and then they wasn't enough, and I was obliged to call in a fourth. Yes, indeed, sir, I was, and she going about the town saying I was nothing but drunk all the time,—me that never puts a drop of liquor into my mouth from one end of the week to the other,—not to say, you know, sir, but what I likes a glass or two of gin of a could morning. *That's* neither here nor there. *Nor* would I refuse a nice glass of rum-and-water, hot and strong, with plenty of sugar; that's very nice, too, sir, though I must say I prefers it neat. That's the real thing, after all.'—'Well, Mrs. Brown,' says I, 'will you call at our house next Thursday?' 'Call, sir?—Yes, she called me all the names you can think upon. She's a nice one, too, for to find fault wi' people, she es. Only last week, sir, she was fighting here in the middle of the street with some go-about woman or other. There's a beauty for you! Not that I would say a word again fighting as fighting; that's a thing, you know, sir, that can't be helped; no harm, sir, whatever, in fighting here among ourselves—*that's* what I calls respectable—but to

go fighting with a tramp, that's what I finds fault with. But she's low, sir,—low—very low.' If you plaise, mum," said John, stopping abruptly short in his story, "there's a—gen'lm'n, I s'pose he calls hisself—down a waitin' for to see you."

"A gentleman waiting to see me?" said Mrs. Tremayne; "why didn't you say so before?"

"Why, you know, missus, I couldn't hinterrupt you in the middle of what you was saying. But, Lor! tes no odds for he—he's nothing at all. I can see that with half an eye."

"But where did you leave him?—and why didn't you ask for his card?"

"Consarning of where I left him, mum, I left him in the lobby; and respecting of his card, I did ask 'un for it, but a said a hadn't got none wi' 'un. However, he tould me to say that his name was John Prester, and that he was just come from Amerikay."

"Wha—a—t!" screamed the old lady, starting up. "John Prester, did you say, from America? My dear, dear Emily, can it be? Oh dear, whatever shall we do?"

"Why, aunt," said Emily, "do you think it possible it can be the person we were speaking of? Did he say anything else, John?"

"Nothing else, miss," replied John, who had been opening his eyes wide at seeing his mistress so much startled,—"nothing else, but that missus might perhaps guess who he was."

"It is he, Emily; it is he, I know it is. I feel as if I were going to see a ghost; my thoughts of him lately have been sent as a warning. I see it all now. John, give me a glass of wine—port wine, John—the small decanter on the right hand side. That's it—oh dear, oh dear!"

THE ELOPEMENT.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

I.

Oh! is it joy or sorrow, hope or fear,
  Awakes this tremor in my timid breast?
I must commune in secret. Come not near,
  Aught that my solemn musings may molest.
He wedded and *unwedded*—ecstasy!
  The scroll of Fate is then, at last, revealed,
Which hid from Love a deeper mystery
  Than ever Sphinx from Œdipus concealed!

"My dear Emily, have you seen *this?*" exclaimed Mrs. Wentworth to her daughter, as she absolutely started with surprise, whilst glancing over the "Fashionable Intelligence" of a morning paper. "But I need not ask you," she continued; "for, certainly if you had, you never could be preparing the breakfast in such a formal, phlegmatical manner."

"I have not yet looked over the paper, mamma; but what does it contain to disturb either your equanimity or mine?"

"Why! the elopement of Lady Lindsford."

"Lady Lindsford eloped? Impossible!"

"Nay, so far from its being impossible, it appears a grave and serious matter of fact. But listen whilst I read the astounding announcement: 'We are exceedingly sorry to inform our readers of a *faux-pas* in high life, which has plunged several members of the aristocracy into considerable distress. The beautiful Lady Lindsford eloped from Park-lane yesterday evening with a gallant son of Mars, the Honourable Frederick Staunton. We understand that the distracted husband left town the instant after the fatal discovery in pursuit of the fair fugitive, with, no doubt, the intention of challenging the base violator of his domestic peace.' There, Emily; a pretty creature she has turned out!"

"How dreadful, mamma! What must be poor Lord Lindsford's feelings at this moment?—what those of his most infatuated wife ere this? Why, she has actually left two children,—one a mere infant; how could she ever bring herself to abandon them?"

"Oh, as for that, I do not believe the thought of their utter helplessness occasioned her an instant's hesitation. You may rely on it, Emily, that when once a married woman has lent a willing ear to the protestations of unhallowed love, the greatest obstacle is overcome; the Rubicon is passed, and all other considerations sink into insignificance with her; it is truly "le *premier* pas qui coûte;" after she has made that fatal advance beyond the pale of rectitude, she can trample without remorse on all other claims of duty, affection, or morality; nay, like Tullia, drive over the mangled corpse of her father, if it impeded her passage to infamy."

"Oh, mamma! you are judging her too severely. You do not make allowance for the temptations to which she was exposed,—the importunities she resisted,—the anguish to which she most reluctantly yielded,—the threats which, perhaps, intimidated her into compliance."

"All romance and rhodomontade, my dear child; the morbid sympathy of youth for erring beauty. No, Emily, no; she encountered none of these imaginary struggles. There are no ferocious Tarquins in these sober days, 'Dieu soit loué,' to come sword in hand to rifle us of our most precious chastity; no Appiuses to gain their nefarious object by false and fraudulent fabrications. An elopement such as hers is almost a matter-of-fact affair; and when she crossed the sanctified threshold of her husband's roof, hand-in-hand with her seducer, she was as most perfectly aware at the moment of her guilty flight that she was for ever barring its doors against her—for ever banning herself with shame and ignominy—as well as if a herald had proclaimed it aloud in the streets through which she sped with such conscious haste. Men, Emily, are easily and effectually repulsed by one word of proper reproof; but, depend upon it, that Frederick Staunton sounded the deepest depths of that shallow and vain mind ere he ventured to hint at the degrading proposal which has met with such signal success."

"Well, mamma, I cannot condemn her in so unqualified a manner; I fancy there must be some mitigating circumstance to palliate such extreme turpitude, could we but know it."

"That is the charitable construction of youth, and only becoming and laudable in you; but I fear little would be gained in her favour could we unravel the whole tissue of the dark and tangled intrigue. There is no doubt but that Lord Lindsford is somewhat to blame in the unfortunate business; he certainly was too indulgent, too incautious; he placed too implicit a faith in the integrity of a very giddy, thoughtless woman;

and, although I pity him for the sad result of his blind confidence, I cannot entirely exonerate him for his credulous reliance."

"Alas! mamma, how little that is saying for the credit of our sex! Is a husband to expect no other reward for confidence and kindness from the wife he so fondly trusts, except ingratitude and infidelity? Are women so naturally base and treacherous? God forbid! or how should I regret being one of such a class!"

"God forbid! say I, too. Happily, the frail creature now under discussion forms the rare and melancholy exception to the bright and spotless nature of woman. Still, I must repeat, that some, even well-disposed women in many respects, are totally and irretrievably ruined by the unreserved belief reposed in them—the women who, like Lady Lindsford, are educated simply for the *eye*, not the *heart*. The gaudy insects that expand their gorgeous wings only in the summer region of fashion, and flutter through the radiant season of youth; fed on the roses of adulation, without being once pierced with the sharp thorns of that sterner truth, which, in wounding, also *purify* the heart they thus so sanatively probe. The women who are never taught that pain and sorrow *may* be theirs,—old age and decay *must* be theirs should they survive the present fleeting period of unworthy triumph; that, as wives and mothers, as friends and neighbours, acts of mutual kindness and love, mutual charity and good-will, mutual pity and forbearance, are expected from them to alleviate the pains and penalties of mortal existence. The women, in fact, who, contemplating their own unequalled beauty, consider the charms and graces of *person* the Alpha and the Omega of human creation; and, to preserve which unimpaired, the whole and sole object of a reasonable creature. I thought, at one time, you might have become Lady Lindsford, Emily."

"Me! mamma! How could you ever imagine so? Lord Lindsford never gave me any real cause to anticipate such an event; he never compromised himself, I can positively assert; mamma never said one word to lead me to such a conclusion."

"No, no, that I grant; he *said* nothing, I admit, to induce you to conceive that he loved you; but what did he not *do*, my poor child, to delude you with such a supposition? But thus men too frequently escape the charge of dishonour by a mean subterfuge, and, regardless of the affections they have enthralled, the sensibility they wound, take refuge under the heartless mockery of never having given utterance to one expression which might, even remotely, deceive the foolish girl who mistook common politeness for earnest devotion. But he is righteously punished for his perfidy; and may he feel the full force of the retribution which has now overtaken him."

"Oh, mamma! mamma! how can you be so vindictive? Not for worlds would I have him suffer one pang through me!—not for worlds would I be associated in his mind with one painful or revengeful thought! I never did, indeed I never did, believe he meant anything serious in those attentions."

"Come! come! Emily, I can pardon you for every attempt to screen the man you yet consider faultless; but I cannot pardon your attempt to impose on my judgment. This affected ignorance of Lord Lindsford's motives cannot deceive me—cannot deceive yourself. Confess then, candidly, that you were most grievously hurt and disappointed at his unexpected union with Blanche St. Aubin? I freely own that I was,

and nothing but the dread of adding to your anguish and mortification kept me from openly denouncing him to the world; but your pallid cheek and tearful eye restrained a mother's just indignation, my darling. I wonder whether he thinks at this moment what a different wife he might have had in you?"

"I trust an idea so offensive to delicacy, so revolting to all that is pure and feminine, has never struck Lord Lindsford in the midst of such disgrace and misery."

"It has—I am positive it has—and more than once, even in the short space which has elapsed since the discovery of his wreck of happiness. Your quieter and calmer image would instinctively rise on his memory in contrast to the turbulent and impetuous creature he was then pursuing, striking the bowed-down soul with a stone-like force, an agonising recoil, under the humiliating depression of frustrated hopes and blighted expectations. Yet should he, after obtaining a divorce, offer you his hand, I should grieve to see you accept it."

"How can you allow such improbabilities to gain a moment's ascendancy over your really sound mind, mamma? *He* offer me his hand! The mere supposition is too incredible, too monstrous to dwell upon, even as an unfounded conjecture. But, were he capable of such an outrage, do you think, mamma, that I am so lost to a proper sense of decorum as to accept it?"

"I fear you might—I greatly fear you might; that is, if the poor deserted children were not considered a decided objection by you."

"*They* an objection! Oh, no! If any one thing could induce me to listen to their wretched father, it would be pity for them."

"Ah! so you think now—so you believe now—and I give you the fullest credit for the most disinterested generosity of feeling; but, Emily, you are dazzled by a dangerous and deceptive fallacy—a glittering and evanescent enthusiasm. I know human nature better than you, my child. I know that the best heart which ever beat in mortal bosom is, after all, selfish and exacting. I know that those very children for whom you are now willing to make the most heroic sacrifices—were such proofs of devotion necessary to test your sincerity in the cause of humanity—will be hereafter regarded by you with almost abhorrence—will awaken in your now compassionate heart the most poignant anguish, the most intolerable misery—misery of which you can have no conception, until you clasp a babe of your own to it. Oh, Emily! of all the various emotions which thrill to ecstasy the sentient soul, and forces on it the sublime consciousness of its divinity, not one is to be compared to the exquisite rapture with which a mother strains her own infant to her palpitating breast—with which she jealously challenges the love and tenderness of all around for it—with which, in holy pride, she craves that of the angels of heaven for it! Think, then—think what would be your utter agony, when you beheld the eye of your husband, of its father, wander from its worshipped face to rest more pitifully, more lingeringly, on the infants of another—the infants whom you could not, you durst not, attempt to rival or supplant—the infants who proffered their claims to his everlasting affection in the darkest hour of his despair."

"Mother! I should loathe and detest myself if I could for one instant cherish so unholy, so awful a sentiment against such helpless innocents. God forbid that I should ever be so sorely tried! God of Heaven forbid! for we none of us know our own strength, our own *weakness*."

II.

Chaste Heaven! that dost the chastest love inspire,
Temper the heart, which sudden hope elates,
And calm to reason ev'ry rash desire,
As purest gold all dross precipitates!
Oh, teach me! in life's most refulgent hour,
Clouds still may overshade serenest skies;
That, when such storms appear, I may have pow'r
To face their darkness with unquailing eyes!

Some time elapsed after Lady Lindsford's flight unmarked by any event of peculiar interest, except that Lord Lindsford had obtained his divorce, and Emily had refused two extremely eligible offers of marriage, which her mother certainly considered rather absurd; but, as she was an only child, and entitled to a large fortune, Mrs. Wentworth did not feel that necessity of coercing her inclinations which many a fonder mother is driven to who is less independent; merely observing, "that youth and beauty did not last for ever, and that every season produced its succession of younger loveliness to compete with that already admired and esteemed."

Lord Lindsford, since his domestic sorrow, had become a perfect dead letter in the annals of fashion, having retired to his country seat in the north of England; communicating with none of his former friends, and never being, by any chance, mentioned by them, he was indeed forgotten by the world—the world in which he had shone so conspicuously but a short period previously! So true it is, however—we may flatter ourselves to the contrary—that the instant we cease to contribute to the pleasure, or promote the advantage of others, we are a blank—a nonentity in their estimation.

Emily, like the rest of his acquaintances, preserved an unbroken silence respecting one who evidently did not wish or seek to be remembered; preferring to brood over his wrongs in the moodiness of uninterrupted solitude, to the sympathy of friendship, or the compassion of pity.

She was, therefore, most exceedingly amazed and agitated at receiving the following letter from him, just as she and her mother were preparing to pass the winter on the Continent:

"Emily,—I feel that some far more powerful apology is due from me for thus presuming to address you, after my past unmanly conduct, than I have thought to dictate, or words to express. I am utterly wretched now—have been too long familiar with misery, to shrink from the additional anguish with which your resentment may oppress me. I can but be wretched should you prove inflexible; but all is not absolute despair within my heart; one spark of the vestal fire of hope yet lingers amidst its smouldering ashes, to be rekindled to a radiant glory, if you will deign to listen patiently to me, to have pity—*mercy*—on me. Oh, Emily! I am but too conscious how poor a compliment it is to abjure you to take possession of so desecrated a fane as my polluted hearth; but I am too much in earnest to study to disguise by flattery the naked truth—too intent on success, to measure with a critical eye the rugged ground over which I must speed to reach the goal of my wishes, ere another, a more favoured competitor, robs me of the prize for which I now contend as for my very life.

"Besides, do I not know the adorable simplicity of your nature, the ingenuousness of your mind, the placability of your heart? Ought I not to be encouraged by the angelic attributes with which you are so richly endowed, to lay the wounded spirit before you which you alone can heal?

Do I not know that, guileless as you are yourself, you have still an inexhaustible fund of Christian charity to expend on the faults of others? Do I not know that you are melted by contrition—that you can, that you *will* pardon and excuse the erring reason, which, blinded by folly, and misled by passion, was so insane as to prefer the mere meretricious beauty, which dazzles the senses only, to the dearer, the more winning graces, which, as soft as twilight, steal upon the heart?

"Emily!—my ever precious Emily!—will you become my wife? Will you fill the dread vacuum of my soul? Will you withdraw the cloud from my sun, the curtain from my mind, and bid light and cheerfulness beam around me once more? Will you refuse my supplications? Will you refuse my prayers? Will you refuse my tears? Will you refuse all that *I* can offer? Well; be it so. But, Emily—my Emily—I *dare* you to refuse the more powerful advocates who are now going to call on you, to pause ere you consign me to despair for ever. I have retained two special pleaders to intercede for me, whose eloquence must touch your gentle heart; for it is the speechless eloquence of helpless, *motherless* infancy. My babes entreat your tenderness for their father—for themselves.

"What a privilege is yours! You have only to speak one word, to bring joy and gladness where all is woe and desolation. Never will you have such an opportunity of showing mercy again! But once is such a divine right granted even to the best on earth—but *once*. Neglect not, then, the acceptable time. Speak, Emily, speak, while my heart can yet hear you! Speak, while I yet live! Speak, as you hope for salvation!"

What a letter to receive from the man whom she had so long, so secretly, so adoringly loved, so unceasingly regretted!—from the man whom she so deeply, so devoutly compassionated!—from the man for whom she had, and must reject all others!

It was a terrible trial—a terrible temptation! She recalled all her mother's prophetic words; she recalled the awful picture she had portrayed of the envy and hatred which was to usurp the pity and commiseration of her heart, when she, too, should be a mother; she felt how dangerous to happiness was the risk of succeeding to such matchless beauty and blandishment; she knew her own pitiable distrust of her capabilities of fascinating; she remembered that he who now thrilled her heart to its inmost core had deserted her, without remorse, when he could not be ignorant of her feelings towards him; and, more than all—far worse than all, she recollected how prone she was to that jealousy which, in disparaging self, yet elevated others to an eminence far beyond their merits. Oh! who could convince her that she had nothing more to fear from the fatal charms which had so cruelly robbed her of felicity once? Oh! who could convince her that their lovely memory did not yet haunt the silent avenues of that heart which was now proffered to her humbler attractions? Yet, was beauty all?—was worth, was virtue, love, piety, of no account to render affection permanent and pleasing? Might she not hope to regain that wandering heart entirely by long and constant care—to win those of his forlorn babes, by tender and untiring attention? Ah those babes! truly had he said that they would plead most strongly for him!

She would take time to consider—she must have time to reflect—she would ponder over the perilous affair alone, ere she breathed a sentence of it to her too prejudiced mother; she would commune with her own

heart in her own chamber, in the mute and solemn hush of night; she would ask to be directed; she would *pray* to be directed. Her heart did not leap up now with the full and free consent of its first untried girlhood's faith; for it was heavy in her bosom with old disappointment, old scorn, old unthought-of and unpitied neglect.

Perturbed and agitated from long and anxious reflection—such reflection as the most cruel state of doubt and indecision could alone occasion—Emily, after retiring for the night, found it in vain to attempt to sleep, so, quitting her restless pillow, and flinging a shawl round her, she approached the window, and pressing her hot and throbbing brow against the cool and welcome pane of frosted glass, she sank into a pensive and melancholy reverie; then, raising her tear-swollen eyes to heaven, as if to seek encouragement and consolation there, she was struck with the gorgeous magnificence of the skies, studded as they were with a mighty and glittering host of stars.

Ah! she thought, who should despair, when the very eyes of Providence seem to be watching over the suffering—yea, and the sinful—sons of earth? Oh, stars! beautiful, bright, transcendent, immortal stars! she apostrophised, can you, indeed, condescend to survey this city of the plague from your sublime and glorious altitude? Can you, in your serene benignity, look upon the dark and dismal scenes now defacing and deforming the original purity of creation, without horror, as you keep your silent guard over the mid of night? Now, oh stars! the decrepit usurer creeps to his hoarded and useless wealth; while the spendthrift hurries to the gaming-table, to squander the money just obtained from him for the last paternal acre! Now, the faded beauty flies to her cordials and romance, for the dangerous stimulant, delusive flattery, is no longer bestowed upon her by a neglectful world; and the blooming one hastens to the heat and crowd, which all too shortly will render her spring loveliness of the wintry and oblivious past also! But now, in this solemn pause between light and darkness, this holy hush, this warning silence—more pregnant with instruction than all the eloquence of ancient lore—who amongst us, yet wakeful and vigilant, yet active in the pursuit of life and its startling vicissitudes, feels and acknowledges the awful lesson of this schooling calm? Who amongst us bestows one serious thought on the important end for which he was really formed out of the dust of the earth—in which he is still fain, alas! to grovel?

Here am I, oh stars! speculating with a perplexity, alike wearisome to mind and body, on the uncertain chances of terrestrial happiness or misery yet in store for me; as if the lease of my mortal existence was to last to eternity, instead of expiring in a mere point of time!

But not alone, oh ye gentle and blessed stars! are ye compelled to shudder over human weakness and depravity. Not alone is the black-lettered volume of crime now laid open for your perusal. No; registered in the pages of this eventful hour, are glorious traits of *old*-world innocence, primeval virtue, God-inspired charity, humility, faith, hope, and love, shining above the ruin and decay of vice and abomination! And, oh ye dear and lambent stars! another record shall be added for your kindred and beneficent contemplation—the soul-strengthening resolution which I now take to endeavour, with all my might, to comfort and console the afflicted and the bereaved, the sad and the desolate. Watch over me, then, watch over me, that I neither fail nor falter in my good and upright purpose!

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ONE of the best modes, perhaps, of controlling a powerful grief within our own bosoms, is the task, so often imposed upon us, of assuaging that of others. When all was over, and Margaret and her mother were left to the undisturbed flow of their sorrow, the latter gave way to its course with a violence that served, in some degree, to counteract that of her daughter; it called forth all her powers of soothing.

But, in spite of the sanguineness natural to her age and temperament, and the chimerical hopes with which her mother finally suffered herself to be lulled into something like composure, a feeling of wretchedness and desolation crept over the hearts of both, as night closed in upon them in their unaccustomed state of bereavement.

When Paul had forsaken his place in the domestic circle, the vacuum had been deeply felt, even by those who had long wished his departure; but now the chief of the family was torn from it, it seemed as if home were home no longer. Chievosa, and even the very menials, desisted from intruding either their presence or their condolence on the misery of that evening.

The stars brightened, and then faded away from the heavens, and night gave way to the first paly light of dawn, before Margaret dared beseech her mother to betake herself to repose; but wearied out at last by the very vehemence of her grief, she was obliged to comply with her desire, and, leaning on her daughter's arm, she left the room.

With intuitive delicacy Margaret conducted her to the little chamber that had been exclusively her own since childhood, and, having placed her on her couch and seen her eyes close, she watched by her until weariness, in spite of all resistance, overpowered in turn the youthful watcher.

To those who grieve, sleep, like all else in this world, bears another aspect than to the happy, and tears trembled on the lashes of Margaret even in her short and troubled slumbers, whilst the oblivion of her mother was the leaden one produced by extreme exhaustion, which is rather a respite than a refreshment.

But with the glad summer sun beaming in their faces, it was impossible not to feel a greater disposition to hope than during the chilly stillness of night; for, although the weary heart may quarrel with its splendour, it cannot help feeling some of its beneficial effects. So it was with Mary, always peculiarly alive to external impressions, and Margaret perceived with pleasure that her first thoughts on the morrow of the eventful day, turned rather to schemes for the deliverance of her husband than to repinings at his loss. She began to consider his absence but as a passing affliction; and her view of the case was shared by Margaret, but their hopes were based on very different foundations.

Notwithstanding the little foibles and peculiarities that often veiled his good qualities from superficial observers, Margaret had great reliance on Van Diest's truth and soundness of judgment; and his advice so strongly

urged, and coinciding with the opinions of the two friends she most valued on earth, her uncle and Father Eustace, had revived, in full force, her suspicions of Chievosa; and whereas her mother regarded him as their only, or at least most efficient, friend, and fancied that through him all her brightest visions for her daughter might yet be realised, Margaret, unable to find any satisfactory clue to his conduct, looked upon him with a distrust almost amounting to dread, and determined to use the greatest caution, henceforth, in all her dealings with him.

On entering the sitting-room to seek some trifle required by her mother, she started, involuntarily, on seeing the object of her long and anxious meditations of the night, as if he had been the last person she expected to meet; and though she had prepared herself for this interview, pre-arranged every word she would say, every answer he was likely to make, she felt herself trembling and disconcerted in his presence, as though there were none on earth to interfere between her and his authority.

Chievosa marked her agitation, and thence inferred, what, indeed, he had not for an instant doubted, that filial obedience, and the distress of the moment, would achieve his triumph.

He advanced towards her with an air of tender familiarity and sympathising condolence, showing how secure he now felt of having reached his aim; nor could he so entirely repress a smile of exultation as to conceal it entirely from Margaret. He succeeded, however, in repressing all evidence of this feeling, both in his looks and the intonation of his voice, when he addressed her.

"Now, Margaret, that a father's blessing rests upon us, and makes our union as much a matter of duty as of feeling, I may, indeed, greet you again as mine. And as mine, Margaret, let me encourage you to look forward to the future with hope and pride; for both feelings, believe me, will be amply justified in the future."

"Let us not anticipate so rashly the future," said Margaret, who during this short exordium had regained something of her usual composure. "I think it but fair to let you know that nothing on earth but my father's situation could have induced me to favour your pretensions to my hand."

"This is not a flattering declaration, I must confess," said Lopez, proudly drawing up his handsome person. "But, once possessed of that fair hand, it shall be my care to warm your virgin heart, which yet lies cold and pure as mountain snow; for what says my favourite poet——"

"This is no time for talking poetry," said Margaret; "we have more weighty matters for thought in this hour of trial. You have ever found me frank, perhaps more so than you could wish. Be assured I shall be at all times true to my word. Hear me, then, coolly; no vehemence can alter the decision I have formed, and am about to communicate to you, and strife can but embitter our spirits. So long as my father is a prisoner, no inducement shall prevail upon me to become your wife!"

Margaret had foreseen the shock which this communication would produce upon Chievosa, and nerved herself to support it.

"Disappoint me!—baulk me—and her father at my mercy! Is the girl mad!" said the Spaniard, laughing in very scorn and bitterness. "Or do you mean to repeat to me that you value a little paltry romance, your one day's dream of a young stranger lad of whom you know nothing, above your father's safety—perhaps his life?"

"I do not know to what you would allude," replied Margaret, crimsoning to her very temples; "but I will try to make my meaning clear to you."

"Shall I expound mine?" said Chievosa, in the smothered tones of violent rage which he kept subdued only by means of the most energetic effort of volition. "Pray let me do that, and allow me to point out to you, at the same time, the result of your childish and most unfilial stubbornness."

"It is needless!" answered Margaret, whose spirit rose with the opposition it encountered. "Had your professions of affection towards any of us been sincere, of course there had been no necessity for a bribe to induce you to perform an act of justice and gratitude, as well as friendship —for my father has been very kind to you, Lopez."

"Cruel girl! you would have me sacrifice my life to save your parent, and would not, even then, perhaps, shed a tear on my grave. You would have a poor fisherman, tossed on the wild waves of a stormy sea, renounce the pearl above all price for which he had braved their fury, yield it to another, and perish in the foaming element. Oh, Margaret! flower of beauty, fairest pearl of the ocean—even as that glorious knight——"

"Nay," interrupted Margaret, "you have so often used, or misused, these poetical allusions to my name, that you should, by this time, be convinced of their insufficiency. I must repeat what I have so often said—pray let us talk prose, that we may understand each other. I am none of the Moorish, or the heathenish damsels to whom you so frequently compare me, thank God! but a simple Christian maiden of Antwerp, a burgher's daughter, speaking—so far as I know and think—to a Spanish clerk, and not to a knight of Queen Isabel's court. So let us put aside all chivalric romance, and speak as beseems our stations. I have a bargain to propose—will you listen to my conditions?"

The swarthy lineaments of the youth had deepened into a richer colour under the maiden's reproof; it settled into one red spot on his lofty brow, and there was an expression of unutterable fury in his dark eyes as they flashed on her. He replied, however, with Spanish courtesy,

"I am the slave of your will."

"Then," said Margaret, "this is my firm determination. No threats—no flattery—no personal fears or sufferings—shall ever induce me to marry you, except upon one condition. I will act fairly by you, rest assured of that. Ungenerous—unfeeling as I consider your wishes under the circumstances in which we stand, I will not disappoint them, nor refuse to acknowledge your claims upon my gratitude, if you but effect my father's escape to England, and enable my mother to join him in that country. When once I am assured that you have accomplished this, my hand—my fortune shall be at your disposal. Firm as I now am towards you, so will I then be towards all those who may seek to interfere with your claims. When my parents embark for England I will not accompany them, but remain here, in this house, a hostage in your hands. I have not the unfilial disposition in my heart with which you have reproached me; but I will take no step *in vain*. Speak not," she continued, hurriedly, perceiving Chievosa's anger about to explode—"speak not, I entreat you; I will listen to nothing that would but exasperate us both. If you really love me, surely it is not so difficult to win me."

Having spoken these words, Margaret hastily passed from Chievosa into her mother's apartment, astonished at her own boldness in having supported the conversation in a tone much more lofty than she had prejudged advisable. She had, however, succeeded in speaking her mind without injury to herself—a circumstance which gave her courage to attempt a similar manœuvre in another, and less trying quarter.

It was by means of persuasion and entreaty that she determined to break her resolution to her mother. She found her task here fully as difficult as she had feared it would be. The conviction of Mistress van Meeren was firm—that a strict compliance with the parting wishes of her husband was the first of duties. From this idea, for some time, she was not to be shaken ; but she was, finally, won over by her daughter's solicitations and representations, not to ugre matters to extremities at present, and to leave space for Chievosa's fears and wishes to work their utmost. Her mother, in the mean time, strove to obtain her promise to renounce, for ever, the spiritual guidance of Father Eustace, and the temporal aid of her uncle Paul ; but finding that her insistance on this point would merely add the curse of domestic discussions to their other sorrows, she contented herself with keeping her daughter under the strictest surveillance, not allowing her, under any pretence whatever, to stir from home.

Their few remaining servants, alarmed at what had befallen their master, deserted the house on the following morning; and no one remained but the aged nurse, whose fidelity was such that she would have followed her young mistress even to the gates of the Inquisition, if not actually within its walls.

Visitors and friends had long since been repulsed by Cornelius, or dispersed by the events of the times; and Mary and her daughter would have been left to an unbroken solitude but for Lopez, who was as calm in appearance as though Margaret's distant manners, and her steady determination, were but airy obstacles to his wishes—the caprices and fantasies of a young girl, and were to be treated accordingly.

He chose to take this view of the matter whilst talking over the circumstance with Mistress van Meeren; but he owned himself bound in gallantry to obey his fair inamorata as much as in him lay, and he assured her that, in the mean time, he would be active in furthering her husband's liberation. Mary, when the first burst of her sorrow was over, looked forward to that liberation with a sanguine confidence which Margaret could no more share than her blind trust in Chievosa. Neither was she deceived by Lopez's suavity and apparent calmness, but intuitively felt that the spirit of defiance with which they had parted but a short time before—as she then thought for ever—was yet alive in the bosoms of both. She considered him in no other light, despite appearances and probabilities, but that of a secret foe who was seeking, for some inexplicable cause, to wrong her friends and herself, under the mask of friendship.

Nor was this feeling in any way lessened by her not being able to define or account for it ; but, like all instinctive impulses, it was not to be driven away by any course of reasoning. She secretly purposed to avail herself of the first moment of liberty at her command to seek the advice of Father Eustace, or the protection of her uncle Paul ; but should both, by any unforeseen accident, fail her, she determined rather to avail

herself of the sagacity of the undecided and timorous Van Diest, or throw herself upon the kindness of Kay, or any acquaintance of former days, however slight, than trust her father's fate, and her own, implicitly to one whom she so much doubted.

Thus passed a few days, sadly enough for poor Margaret. Her fears for her father had been much increased, by discovering that a Bible had disappeared, in which Paul had imprudently written his brother's name on presenting it to him. That those who had so unceremoniously ransacked the house had removed this volume she could scarcely entertain a doubt; and so formidable an accessory might prove a very important witness against him.

No account penetrated into their interior of the great and general sympathy which their misfortune had excited in the neighbourhood, nor could Margaret obtain the slightest news of her poor father, nor induce Chievosa to betray his place of confinement. Still she did not despond. Next to the consolation which her piety afforded her, she derived the greatest comfort from occupation, rightly judging that by giving way to grief she would only unfit herself for the many trials that might yet be in store for her, and which she was resolved to meet with that firmness which at times alone can turn aside the arrow of misfortune.

The long absences of Chievosa were rather a relief than matter for regret; nor did she shrink from the many hours of solitude imposed upon her by her mother, when absent at her devotional duties, or on any little calling of her own.

One fine afternoon, being thus left to herself, with strict injunctions not to leave the house, Margaret sat near the open window at her favourite occupation. She was illumining a very fine herbary presented to her, not many months previously, by William Kay for that purpose; but her wandering thoughts remained not truer to the coloured page than they had before to the sedative spinning-wheel. The figure reposing meditatively under a pear-tree, on which she had already lavished a sky-blue robe trimmed with sables, was forgotten, and the tiny brush was permitted to remain inactive; whilst, with a listless hand, she turned page after page, without remarking the now simple, but then highly-esteemed, domestic or medical plants which she had ingeniously, though rather fantastically, coloured.

She turned again to the title-page, on the blank leaf opposite to which was a wreath of *Marguerittes* exquisitely painted by William Kay himself, within which were written simply the words—"To her;" reminding her vividly of the charm of their past intimacy. From this remembrance she was hurried to many another, until, shading her brow with her hand, she fell into so deep a meditation that she did not notice the return of her mother, who stood for some time near her, scanning her countenance narrowly.

The anxious observation of the mother detected the traces that frequent tears had left on her child's weary eyelids, the pallor of her cheek, and suddenly bethinking herself that the close confinement to which she had of late condemned her, might have a bad influence upon her health, if too obstinately adhered to, she said:

"I think, Margaret, a little air will do you no harm, and it might be a comfort to visit a church. Promise me only, my child, that you will not go to St. Michael's, and I will allow you to absent yourself for a couple of hours. I need not conceal from you that I have been informed

your uncle is not yet returned, so that all endeavours to see him would be fruitless. Go, Greta; do nothing that could incense Lopez were he to hear of it, for I have my reasons to believe he keeps a watchful eye upon our movements."

Margaret, on hearing these words, experienced a reprieve, such as a bird may be supposed to feel when first restored to liberty. She lost no time in throwing on her *faille*, and, burying her face as deeply as was practicable within its ample hood, she hurried over the *Meerbrugge*. Had not her mother so peremptorily interdicted St. Michael's, doubtless she would have flown thither. Her uncle's house, too, was forbidden ground, and she was undecided whither to direct her steps.

The herbary on which she had so lately been employed suggested, however, a thought to which she resolved to yield.

When entreated by his niece to point out some means of personal communication, Paul had named to her a very fine garden, the property of a friend, immediately outside the Kaiserpoort, on the road to Borgerhout, as a place where they might occasionally meet, without fear of being either disturbed or watched by invidious persons. The gardener, a strict though not an open Protestant, he mentioned as one whom she might entrust with any message for him. The stolen interviews of the uncle and niece had been but few, weightier matters having almost exclusively claimed Paul's time; and Margaret thought herself scarcely justified in seeking this secret intercourse without the approbation of her parents. Messages, until now, Margaret had none to send; and thus this neutral ground had been seldom visited by her. She now bethought herself of it and its trusty keeper.

Hastening down the *Kipdorp* street, she had well-nigh reached the *Kaiserpoort*, when her progress was interrupted by a crowd of people rushing down a neighbouring thoroughfare, and nearly overwhelming her. She prudently ascended the stone steps of a house near which she stood, affording a comparatively safe position, whence she saw above the heads of the people a long file of cavaliers gaily attired, evidently, by the direction the crowd had taken, making towards the gates.

Anxiety pressed too strongly on her mind to admit of indulging, as she would have done a short time previously, in any childish curiosity; impatience, indeed, was the feeling uppermost in her breast at this untimely interruption.

As she gazed abstractedly on the cavalcade, she became suddenly aware, to her no small surprise, that she was courteously greeted by one of the horsemen. The first look she cast in his direction sufficed to reveal to her, under the jewelled barret placed gracefully on his youthful head, the well-remembered features of the mysterious youth who had, in a single visit, worked an effect on her imagination that years of intimacy with Chievosa had failed to produce.

The recollection of all she had then thought, and the rude insinuations of Lopez with reference to that visit, caused in the artless maiden an embarrassment she could not altogether conceal; her cheeks were suffused with blushes as she acknowledged the greeting, and her eyes involuntarily followed the young stranger. He was not alone, for the cavaliers rode two abreast, and the dashing youth at his side, as he turned round in his saddle to gaze at Margaret, exhibited an air of such reckless libertinism that she unconsciously drew the hood of her *faille* more closely round her face. She observed that he addressed something to his companion, point-

ing back at the same time with a careless gesture to the place where she stood; but she also observed, with a feeling of gratified pride, that the youth reddened under his friend's remark; the next minute both were lost within the shadow of the gate.

No sooner had the crowd cleared the thoroughfare than Margaret left her place of security, passed the *Kaiserpoort*, and walked rapidly onwards, notwithstanding the straggling groups that yet lingered on the road, without interruption; but just as she reached the garden door—where her summons for admission were not very promptly attended to—she again became alarmed by the returning multitude, shouting "*Vive les Gueux!*" with an enthusiasm that almost stunned her. The gardener, however, opened the wicket in time to preserve her from accident; and having first carefully turned the key, and replaced the bolts, heedless of her friendly salutations, he rushed up the steps of a small pavilion built upon the wall, whence he gazed with intense interest on the busy scene below.

Margaret was fain to follow his example, when she, too, turned her looks towards the road, and observed the gentlemen she had seen issuing from the town, drawn up in array, awaiting the approach of another party slowly advancing along the road.

These cavaliers were even more richly attired than the former, the greater part wearing the half-armour then in use, the plates of steel shining in glittering contrast to the rich stuffs upon which they rested. When this party came within a fair distance of the other, they made a halt; those of which Arkel made part saluting the new comers by a general discharge of pistols, a compliment which was acknowledged in a similar manner by the others. To Margaret's inexperience this proceeding appeared an unequivocal token of a combat about to commence, and her terror was extreme; but the gardener reassured her by the intelligence that this threatening demonstration was merely a greeting between Count Brederode, the chief of the Gueux, and the Prince of Orange, who had arrived from Brussels with various intentions, as some said, for his real object was not yet publicly known.

After another salute the prince and the count advanced to the front, and embraced with formal courtesy, when the two parties mingled together in friendly groups; the two principal personages being immediately opposite the spot where Margaret stood, she commanded an admirable view of both these remarkable men. The pale, peaked countenance of Brederode, bore in its changeful expression, and varying tints, the impress of violent passions of an ardent temperament, forming a striking contrast to the calm, impassible countenance of Orange, that spoke no more the thoughts, or the feelings, of the man, than does a still sea of the wrecks, or the treasures, it contains beneath its surface. Margaret knew neither but by name; yet she instinctively felt, when gazing on the prince, that mixed feeling of respect and interest which the most casual view of his person never failed to inspire.

Whilst these distinguished personages were exchanging compliments, the people shouted vociferously "Vive les Gueux!" The prince waved his hand impatiently several times, as if desirous of silencing these increasing clamours; but this gesture being interpreted by the crowd as an encouragement, the cry, "Vive les Gueux!" rent the air with redoubled violence, when, turning towards the mob with a frowning brow, Orange shook his mailed hand, and exclaimed in loud, imperative tones,

"Villains! you shall repent this."

These words, accompanied by an action which made them intelligible even to those who were too distant to catch their sound, caused those immediately around him to recoil in dismay and astonishment. Their hereditary viscount, the Prince of Orange, was particularly dear to the inhabitants of Antwerp, his high and gentle qualities having won for him that joyful homage which feodalty exacted, but did not always obtain, from that liberty-loving people. Throughout all the difficulties of those times, their reliance and hope rested upon him; his present severity, therefore, filled them, for the most part, with consternation, and for the moment completely cooled their ardour; still there were some who, being more distant, had the hardihood to continue their vociferous acclamations.

The prince shook his head angrily, and, placing himself once more at the head of his band, rode hastily through the gate, whilst Brederode and his troops followed in a more tranquil order.

"Then," said Margaret, turning to the gardener, who had unbonneted to the prince, as if his very life depended on the humility of his salutation, "the Prince of Orange is not friendly to the *Gueux*. He is about to punish them, it would seem, although the Count of Brederode advanced to meet him, as if he had made sure of an ally."

Despite of her retired habits and education, the young girl was gradually beginning to feel interested in the political struggle that must involve so much of her own happiness. Van Diest had, in a few words, taught her to consider Brederode as the sworn defender of the victims of religious persecution; and the young stranger, whose frank, bold manner so occupied her fancy, was enlisted among his followers. These considerations caused her to listen with eager curiosity to the gardener's reply.

"They say he is a friend to our oppressed Church," answered the man; "though, maybe, he has been sent here by the duchess to keep the town quiet, which the presence of that fiery Count Henry is like enough to disturb."

"How can he be a friend of the Protestants if he comes on an errand of the regent?" inquired Margaret.

"He will prove the better friend," answered the old man, gravely, "that he does nothing hastily, or rashly. The prince is a wise and a true man. But, my young mistress, you are doubtless here to inquire about your uncle, worthy Master Paul. He left word with me, when I last saw him, that he should be absent for a whole fortnight—perhaps a great deal longer—but that if, in the mean time, you wished very much to hear of him, by applying to the foreman of his fabric you might obtain information of his movements. However, I can tell you," continued the old man, with a significant look and smile, "we know pretty well what he is about, for all he may think it a secret. He has been despatched by Count Brederode to the Lord of Thoulouse at Breda, and to some malcontents or other at *Bois le Duc*. He will be taking a regular survey of the districts up there. So now, my good young mistress, you know more than you thought of learning here."

"Most assuredly," answered Margaret, with a sigh, as she thought how Paul's present agitated career was likely to end. "But does Master Kay now occasionally spend an evening hour in this garden, as was his wont?"

"Sometimes he does; less often than formerly. He now almost

always comes alone. Maybe he will come and take a puff of fresh air. If you are desirous of seeing him, you had better wait half an hour or so. The afternoon is fine. Come, Mistress Margaret—come and see how my flowers bloom."

Margaret assenting, he led the way towards the broad and well-shaded terraces, which—for the garden was large, and scarce inferior in beauty to that of the apothecary Conderberg, at Borgerhout, at that time so celebrated—extended parallel with the bastions, and so near them, that from the avenue communication might almost be held with those walking on the walls. With very few exceptions, all the fruit-trees now known were successfully cultivated by the old man.

Vegetables, too, though not, perhaps, in so great abundance, or in such general use, were not wanting; but though the *parterres* boasted a sufficiency of roses, and other indigenous plants, to make them sweet and smiling, many a lovely flower that flourishes in our gardens was then unknown. Of the larger trees there were plenty; nor did the eye that rested on the rich foliage of the beech, the chestnut, and the odorous flower of the majestic lime, feel the want of the sad cypress, the dark myrtle, or the dull green of the olive, whose sober tints contrast agreeably with deeper skies and more glowing suns, but impart gloom to the grey tones of a northern clime.

Margaret having duly admired the old man's salad, a plant at that time rare, and much esteemed, which, he said, he had been informed by Italians themselves far exceeded that so fondly cherished in Italy; his Persian peach-trees, whose delicious fruit, he owned, lost much of its delicate flavour from being exposed to the deteriorating effects of a damp climate, and as many beds of asparagus, cucumbers, lettuce, melons, and cabbage, as any good housewife of these days might wish to behold; and having bestowed her meed of approbation on every improvement and new importation which had lately embellished or enriched the garden, and with untiring patience viewed the but too numerous and complete collections of medical plants, the produce of far-distant lands, and explained to the inquiring gardener their healing properties, her patience was fairly exhausted, and, turning away from her aged companion, she ascended one of the terraces. Thoroughly fatigued, she sat down in a small, stiff arbour, shaped into a room, apertures in the verdure serving as door and windows, commanding a vista formed of a covered alley, at whose extremity bubbled a small Moorish fountain, adding by its gentle murmur to the refreshing and soothing influence of this quiet spot.

Released from the restraint imposed upon her by the presence of her garrulous companion, Margaret gave way to a pleasing sensation of repose; and as she beheld, from her cool shelter, the glorious sunset, mellowed through the trees, she gradually yielded herself up to the lulling, dreamy reverie belonging to the place and hour.

But this oblivious mood was not of long duration. Her thoughts were but too speedily recalled to the sad reality of her father's position, even by the very loveliness of that balmy evening. Did its light penetrate unto him, and give him hope—one cheering thought? Or was he not, perhaps, plunged in some deep, dark dungeon, where neither the sound of the vesper-bell, nor the radiance of the evening sun, told him of time's progress? What might not be the misery to which he was exposed—he, inured to ease and luxury? Her fears took even a darker hue. She recalled to mind the many tragical events that had distracted her native

town, as well as the whole country, for many years, and had left so many orphans in the land, little thinking, when frequently recounted in her presence, that such evils would ever come home to her; they had filled her bosom with indignation and sorrow, and her imagination with images of horror that now recurred to her remembrance but too vividly. Might he not—whilst nature was smiling so brightly around her—might he not at the very moment his daughter was yielding herself up to the pleasing influence of the hour, be closing a Christian's life by a martyrdom worthy the cruelty of ancient Pagans? The terrors of the torture stood before her eyes—it seemed to her as if the shrieks of her father were in her ear, and overcome by the horrors her own fancy had created, she hid her face in her hands and screamed aloud.

A young cavalier had, for some moments previously, been gazing irresolutely upon her through one of the small windows, as if uncertain whether to advance or retire; but at this unequivocal signal of distress, surprise, sympathy, and perhaps curiosity, stronger than either, prompted him to advance, and he started forward at the sound.

THE GARDENS OF SHEDDAD.

[Sheddad, the fabulous Prince of Arabia, rivals, in his reputation for grandeur and potency, Giamschid among the Persians, or Solomon in the traditions of Rabbinical literature. The Prince with his people, says an ancient tradition, which the Koran sanctions, were destroyed for impiety. The Palace and Gardens of Sheddad, in the belief of the Arabian, occasionally rise like an exhalation before a lonely traveller in the desert, and immediately melt before him—much in the manner, we suppose, of a modern dissolving view.]

On the Gardens of Sheddad I gazed for awhile
In the ocean of sand growing up like an isle;
As the sun sank to rest, and rose nothing between
His broad disk and my eye but the air's trembling screen,

The Portal rose golden and glittering to view,
But so thin the faint sunbeams came wandering thro',
And the bright walls and terraces all seemed to shake
Like the mist curling o'er the blue breast of a lake.

By the cool sheltered alleys and pathways grew trees,
The cedar and date-palm, not stirred by a breeze;
With slim cypress drawn out like a film in the air,
And citrons and lemons all fruit-laden there.

Red roses grew blushing,—some budding, some blown,—
Which the bulbul with soft note did claim for his own;
And white marble kiosks were builded along
Sweet waters which leapt down their steps with a song.

From the depths of the groves, when the bulbul was mute,
Came the faintly sweet echoes of tabret and flute,
With shrill dulcimers' chiming—a music not clear
To the sense, but half-born in a dream of the ear.

As the sun still went down the bright scene left the earth,
Like the rainbow which melts with the cloud of her birth;
And the shadows which past o'er his disk bright of sheen,
As of Emirs and Ladies, grew feeble between.

When the sun sank to rest with his last mild farewell,
The gay gardens of Sheddad all flittered and fell;
And the gilt stars were out in the vault of the sky
When I entered the folds of my tent with a sigh.

BUGSLEY'S ONLY TOUR.

A CAVEAT TO ELDERLY GENTLEMEN OF 1851.

PART I.

JOHN BUGSLEY, ESQ., of Prospect Villa, Islington, was about as true a personification of the ancient nomenclature of "Honest John," as we can challenge our readers to produce throughout those blessed and happy realms ruled over by our gracious Queen Victoria. From small to great, John had always preserved an unblemished character for *honesty*. From the first onset in life, as a grocer's apprentice, up to his squireacy, by courtesy, as the retired tea merchant, Bugsley's word was as good as his bond; and now, at fifty-six years of age, as he sat in his easy chair, with his slippers on his feet and his spectacles on his nose, and sipped his glass of grog, and spelt over the *Times*, few men were less afflicted with the turmoils and anxieties of this world than our worthy friend. His capital was snugly invested on a safe mortgage; his comfortable ivy-covered cottage was well furnished; he had two faithful old servants, who administered to all his whims and wants, and as good a cellar of old port wine as ever a Briton wishes to possess.

Bugsley was a bachelor of course, and, moreover, a sedentary one too; not given to travelling or visiting about, or the other cosmopolitan amusements, but lived contented with those little pleasures within his reach and a limited pull on his purse. A basin of turtle soup at Birch's, a visit to the Chinese Junk, and a sight of the Hippopotamus at the Zoological Gardens, being the height of *all* his extravagances. And thus John went poring over the *Times*, and as he sneered at the impudence of Pope Nono, and stared at the accounts of the Glass House, his eye rested upon a whole column of "Cheap Trips" to Paris, Moscow, Geneva, and Rome; to the Lakes, Killarney, the Trossacks, and Ben Nevis;—in short, to almost, if not every known clime or land in the civilised hemispheres; and then his mind came to a dead pause, until he stared at the burning coals as they fell into fantastic shapes, and he almost fancied that he traced in their tortive forms a resemblance, in some, to his own face at fourteen years of age, and, in others, that of the jolly rotundity of his present lot. The comparison was, indeed, past belief,—ay, almost supernatural; so John went on staring, and starting, and thinking, until, at last, one train of thoughts trod on the heels of another so fast, and hurried them on, only to meet a like fate themselves from others, as another set rushed in and usurped their places, until they were all forced to settle down into their original channel—"Cheap Trips."

"I *will* travel!" exclaimed John, aloud. "Humph! Go and see a bit of the world. But where shall I go to? Humph! There is the rub! Paris?—No. They have a disrelish to washing there, and will have a change of dynasty in three days, and, in all probability, even during my stay, another revolution—another blowing up of houses and massacre of people. A change of a republic for an empire. Very pleasant. Petersburgh?—No, thank you. An emperor, and an ukase and a visit to Siberia for thinking your mind is your own, and nothing but tallow and caviare to *fête* upon. No, thank you again. Besides, there is a sea voyage between Folkstone and Boulogne; and I don't know the

lingo;—call their fathers pears, and their mothers mares. Shocking! And they would cheat me right and left; and, besides—— No! I will go to the Lakes—the Lakes of Cumberland. By-the-by, did not those very lakes inspire some great character with poetry, eh? Vide Walter Scott. No! he was a Scotchman. Byron, eh? He was a—a—— What countryman was Byron? A—a—a—— Well, he was a—a—*roué*, at all events. But this was a fellow more sublime, and not quite so infidel as my lord. Well, I will go first day to Manchester, second to Kendal, third, et cetera. So I will."

"So I will"—short as is the sentence—settled the matter in Bugsley's case. He immediately invested three-and-sixpence upon a guide-book, which gave him as much information respecting the Lakes as a Greek lexicon would have done; and then, with the assistance of his old servant Betty, laid in a stock of clothes to rival even those of either Sir John Franklin's, on his voyage to the Polar regions, or Captain Gordon Cumming's, about to lion hunt. By an incessant application of twenty-four hours he overcame the dark passages and intricacies of "Bradshaw's Guide," and discovered a train left the Euston station for Manchester at 9.15 A.M. But, to make "assurance doubly sure," he walked down to Euston-square and interrogated two or three intelligent porters, who all gave contradictory evidence, and, moreover, swore most emphatically to their assertions; and he then questioned a Caledonian policeman, who, with a strong Scotch accent, said he thought "By Dunbar-r-r the shortest way." So Bugsley returned as confused and bewildered as he left Prospect Villa.

On the 1st day of May old Tommy was despatched with Bugsley's luggage to the Euston Terminus, while the worthy merchant himself intended to confine his cares to his Nicol's paletot and Scotch plaid, and himself to the inside of an omnibus, and accordingly hailed the "Tally-ho!" omnibus *en route* for King's Cross, which met the "True Blue" for Euston-square. As soon as ever he entered the "True Blue" he cast his eyes around him, and with a natural intellect, according to Buffon peculiar only to the genus of man, Bugsley perceived his fellow-travellers to be only two—one of either sex. The female was certainly very pretty, quietly dressed, with her hair neatly brought to her cheeks under a pink bonnet, and a shade of melancholy tinging her regular features, and in her arms she nursed a young baby, upon which she appeared to bestow unusual motherly affection. The other person was of the masculine sex; dressed very showily and gaudily in very bright colours, and a great deal of jewellery, and with a nonchalant slang air, and long black ringlets, and a beautiful pair of whiskers meeting underneath the chin, curled and greased to perfection, and an overpowering odour of stale tobacco-smoke. A general silence pervaded the inside of the omnibus; neither of the party spoke until they had passed about half-way down the New-road.

"Oh, there is my mother!" exclaimed the female. "Might I trouble you, sir, for one instant?" as she deposited the baby on Bugsley's knees, and jumped out of the omnibus, paid her fare, and disappeared down one of the bye-streets.

"Right, Jerry!" exclaimed the cad; and the vehicle moved on.

"Holloa! holloa! holloa!" screamed Bugsley, as he found the coach in motion, and himself the temporary possessor of a fine baby, which

turned its little blue eyes upon him as if innocently beseeching his protection—"she's left her baby—*her* baby. Guard! guard! stop, stop!—a—a baby!"

"Babbies in arms not chargeable, sir. Go on, Bill. It is only the old buffer inside a-nursing of his babby," said the cad to the coachman; and then entered into a warm argument with a gentleman on the roof as to the merits and powers of the Tipton Slasher.

"*His* baby, forsooth? My baby! oh, you ugly, horrid brute! born in iniquity and vice."

"Not yours, sir?" inquired the other passenger, who had remained a mute spectator of the scene. "That lady not your wife?"

"No, sir," thundered Bugsley. "I am unmarried, sir—a bachelor, sir."

"An amour, perchance, sir?" said the other, winking, and humming the air of the "Derby Gallop."

"No, sir; never saw the good-for-nothing hussy before. The impudent baggage! I will send the little brute to the workhouse, and have the police after the vicious woman, or my name is not John Bugsley."

"The world is censorious, Mr. Bugsley," said the other.

"What do you mean, sir?" roared John.

"Simply this, sir. Old gentlemen who have got into the sear and yellow object to children, *ci-devant* mammas, police-courts, and orders from magistrates. All unpleasant affairs. Old gentleman, having got into a scrape, don't know how to get out of it. Fears public opinion—maiden sisters—moral friends. Naughty girl suggests a scene in an omnibus; old gentleman agrees; makes a virtue of necessity; adopts his own child; gets credit for a great and philanthropic action, instead of the winks and jeers of his friends, or the finger of scorn of the world. Twig, eh, sir?"

"You are a very saucy fellow, sir," replied Bugsley, in a rage, and with a feeling of conscientious innocence.

"Your personal abuse, sir, will not prevent my giving evidence before a police magistrate. Witness is one of a party of three in an omnibus—old gentleman—young lady. They exchange glances of love and amusement, and playfully tread on one another's feet——"

"It is a falsehood, sir; I never did," roared Bugsley.

"Your language is not even parliamentary, sir. However, rest assured it will not deter me from the duty I owe my country. No, sir. I give evidence to the best of my judgment. Lady elopes out of the 'buss; leaves her baby with the old gentleman, who receives the same, nurses it as if it were his own son, and tells witness a cock-and-a-bull story about gross imposition, unparalleled effrontery, &c. Magistrates, incredulous clerks, and reporters joke; and dish up the whole for the morrow's *Daily News*. Old gentleman reads it; maiden sisters read it; moral friends read it. A pretty kettle of fish!"

"What can I do with the little brute? It wants feeding," said Bugsley, in despair. "Oh! why did I not take a cab?"

"Can you run, sir?" said the other.

"*No*, sir! why should I run? John Bull never runs, sir; why should John Bugsley?"

"Because the evidence is all against you, sir. You confess to witness

that the child was born 'in iniquity and vice.' How do you know that, sir, without you had a previous knowledge of the infant's parentage—how do you know it may not be a young prince royal or a sucking duke, sir?"

"Because, at this tender age, they don't generally travel by omnibuses alone. But what am I to do? I will give you the word of a British merchant I never saw mother or child in my life before."

"Run, sir; run."

"Where? How? When? And my boots pinch me, too."

"Now listen, sir; I will be your saviour; listen. Stop the 'buss, pay a shilling—sixpence for each; bolt down the next alley, and wait for me. Never mind tight boots. And if you don't wait, sir, I will track you—dog you, sir; collar you, sir; and expose you, sir."

"But the baby?"

"Oh, give me the baby. Chucky! chucky! chucky!—titsey bouskey! deary!—good little thing! Now—now, sir! bolt quick, and pay the shilling, and wait, at your peril," said the gentleman of the black whiskers and tobacco odour, as Bugsley delivered up the child and hurried from the vehicle.

As "honest John" made a quick exit, a broad-brimmed hatted Quaker, with a sanctimonious look and an anguishing mien, got into the omnibus.

"Excuse me, Friend Obadiah, for an instant," said the gentleman of whiskers, laying the baby on the Quaker's lap. "My friend has forgot my book of notes, my bills, and my money! In a moment I will be back, sir." With which words he left the coach as quickly as Bugsley, and followed him as fast as he could.

"Done a thing for you Bug, I——" said the gentleman of whiskers, as he joined Bugsley half-way down the bye-street.

"Bugsley, if you please, sir—John Bugsley, late of the firm of Cawdor and Bugsley, tea-dealers, &c., St. Paul's Churchyard."

"Well, Mr. John Bugsley, I have done a thing for you this day I would not have done for my own brother—no, nor my father either—Jove! if I would. Well, where are we for?"

"I am on my road to the Euston station, and had trusted to have been at Manchester to-night."

"Wonderful coincidence! My own route exactly. We will go together—coupe—express train—everything—all right."

"It is not an express train. It is the '9.15 Mixed,' as they call it," said Bugsley, with the surly air of a bear poked up with a pole.

"All right; we will go together. Now then, Cabby," said the unknown, hailing a Hansom. "Fare to Euston station? All right—I will stand cab."

Whiskers having paid the cabman one shilling and dismissed him, on his arrival at the station door made the wonderful discovery he had only a thirty-pound note, which might have struck the initiated as being very like a Bank of Elegance one; not so, however, Bugsley, who was very unsophisticated and quite in the black-whiskered geni's power.

"Pay, Bug, will you?"

"Bugsley, sir, I tell you," said the gentleman addressed, with a deep frown.

"Well, Mr. John Bugsley, pay my fare, will you? and we will settle

when at Manchester. By-the-by, how remiss. My card, sir, if you please—'Captain Montague de Howard,' your most humble, obedient servant to command, sir."

Bugsley paid both the fares in a nervous state of excitement; nay, he would have willingly paid double the amount if required, and there are even some doubts that he would have been willing to have accepted or drawn a bill of exchange for the man, could he but have rid himself of his persecuting acquaintance; but Montague stuck to him tighter than ever the Old Man did to Sinbad the Sailor; he seemed his evil genius—a plague not to be shaken off. "Why had he not resisted the temptation? Why did he listen to his plausible, honeyed words, when he had done no wrong?" were the questions Bugsley asked his conscience.

"Porter—my servant come?" said De Howard.

"Don't know your servant," replied No. 14.

"Smart lad—blue livery—velvet collar—leathers and top-boots—cockade in hat."

"No, sir."

"Confound his impudence!" exclaimed Captain de Howard. "Always the way with servants. Cannot stand corn. Tell him, porter, he is to come on by the next train; and—confound him!—and to pay his own fare, and give you half-a-crown for the information. What is to be done, Bug?"

"Bugsley, sir, I tell you again. He may turn up yet."

"So he may," replied De Howard, with a sneer. "If he don't, I will stop his fare out of his wages. Ah! faithful old servant!—yours, I presume, sir? Respectable-looking person—*verd-antique*—quite," eyeing old Tommy in his green livery, as he was busying himself about Bugsley's luggage.

"Thomas," said Bugsley, with a deep sigh, "things all right?"

"Lost anything, sir?" inquired Tommy.

"No, Thomas—no."

"Things *are* all right, sir; portmanteau, writing-desk, and brown carpet-bag, in the van," replied old Tommy; and then added, in an under tone, "Master is not all right—some'ut up."

Perchance in our daily journeys through life a better companion than Captain Montague de Howard could not have been found to dispel the wearying tedium of a railway journey. According to his own account, he had been everywhere, seen everything, knew every one, and done everything. He had entered the king's service and been quartered in India, and then volunteered to the Bilboa Fencibles, and was present at the action of Hernani; then returned, took half-pay, sold out, and had now serious intentions of accepting a cavalry command at Holstein. "Gad! sir, every piece of my fortune had its reverse, and all through my deuced affection for the ladies," continued Howard. "When I was quartered at Kelat, a Begum took a great fancy to me. One evening we got up a quiet rubber of whist in her ladyship's bungalow; there was myself, and Count Vinderscratch, and the Rajah of Kandawal. The Begum and myself were partners—we were winning everything. The Rajah had staked a few thousand live Hindoos against one of my partner's best Cashmere shawls. We had the game in our hands, when the Begum's daughter entered our tent. I had never seen her before. Ye powers! what an ecstasy of love ran through my every vein. I was entranced—

dumbfounded—beside myself. I trumped my partner's best card—I trod on the Rajah's gouty foot. A mutual shriek of horror aroused me from my rapture, to find we had lost the game, my Begum her shawl and the chance of the Hindoos, and myself all hopes of her empire and affections; and, worse than all—the cause—my divinity gone. Next morning I received my *congé* from the old lady's hum—hum—hum—well, never mind—her secretary, and he enclosed with it a copy of her latest will and pleasure—the decapitation of her angelic daughter's head, and the acceptation of the Rajah's hand in marriage. I was afterwards obliged to shoot Count Vinderscratch for his facetious version of the tale, and his lively pleasantries at my expense, given at a Nabob's ball-supper. In Spain, too, my susceptibility got the better of my heroism. Queen Isabella evinced a great partiality for me. She privately observed most favourably, to one of her maids of honour, upon the symmetry of my figure, and enlarged greatly upon my engaging features; and it cannot be a question that I should have been at the present time a Don of her kingdom, and if not commander-in-chief of her armies, at least one of its greatest generals, but for my deuced stupidity and my blind devotion to the sex. A fair Donna mesmerised my fluttering heart by her dark Oriental eye—entranced my affections. Scandal flew like wild-fire. Proof was wanting to permit a duel with the Donna's husband. However, the worthy gentleman engaged a brace of assassins to stiletto my back on a certain evening. I received secret information and fled the country. Again, and now this is the best story of all, I——"

"Tickets, gents, please!" interrupted the guard.

"Play cards—lansquenet, brag, écarté?" said De Howard, producing a bandana handkerchief, with a race-horse stamped thereon, and laying it across his knees, and then proceeding to deal forth a very greasy pack of cards, which he had just produced from his hat.

"No, never," replied Bugsley, with a growl and a cough. "Once played a game of 'beg-o'-my-neighbour' with my cousin Jane, who was setting her cap at me, but I did not shine at the game—I could not learn my pips."

"Whe-eu—whe-eu! Oh, you Don Giovanni!" exclaimed De Howard, with a long whistle. "You rake, you lover and gambler, in one!"

Finding, however, the worthy tea-merchant was not to be lured into a game of cards, Captain Montague de Howard continued to tickle his appetite with nice sops of scandal and calumny of our aristocracy and men on town, carefully treasured up week by week from the pages of the *Satirist*, or else culled from the gossip of servants at the alehouses, until they arrived at Manchester.

"Oh! Imperial Hotel, of course! By-the-by, just pay the cab, will you? I owe you something already, you remember. Settle at dinner-time—short accounts make long friends. Fine city this. Gad! when I was quartered here, deuced fine girl fell in love with me—deuced rich—unlimited ready money and cotton. No go. Papa objected—mamma despised ancient family and moustachios. Girl would not elope. Self thrown over. Moustachios and all. Of course you will go and see P——r's factory?"

"But I must have an order," said Bugsley. "Must I not?"

"Oh! note of introduction from me quite sufficient. Jolly fellow, P——r. Old friend—good feeds—rare champagne—turtle and whitebait—delicious claret—dog cook."

A few minutes' walk and our friendly pair—if we can use such a paradox to them—were seated in the coffee-room of the hotel, Captain de Howard discussing a tumbler of sherry-cobler through a straw while dictating a note for Mr. Bugsley to indite to Mr. P——r, in his name, urging he could not write it, as he had hurt his wrist. (The first part of his assertion a fact, the latter fabulous and superfluous.)

"Now let me see what you have written," said De Howard, glancing over the note. "Excellent! 'Your disinterested attention and proverbial hospitality while I was quartered in this town.' Bravo! Soft sawder—a famous rounded sentence. I say, what time are we to dine to-day?—half-past six sharp, eh? Waiter! dinner for two!—a bit of fish, a cutlet à la something, house joint, sweets and an omelet to follow, at six o'clock to a moment."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter. "Wine, sir?"

"Eh?—eh?" said Bugsley, with the growl of an irritable bear, as he was excessively annoyed at the expensive dinner already ordered. "I never drink your foreign stuff. No trash or champagne for me."

"My friend does not partake of champagne, and Moselle will be equally objectionable to him, waiter," said De Howard. "What do you drink, my dear sir?"

"Eh? eh? What? eh? I think a—a—bottle of water will do for me."

"My friend requests a bottle of iced water——"

"I did not say iced. Charge for that, next," Bugsley added, in an under tone.

"Well, waiter, water for my friend; claret for myself, or a jug of Badminton. Claret, soda-water, pounded sugar and ice. Six sharp."

As six o'clock chimed forth to the people of Manchester, Bugsley was seated in the coffee-room of the hotel in no very pleasant or enviable mood. He was excessively hungry; he was still fretting over the events of the morning; he almost fancied himself a father in spite of himself; and, to crown all, Mr. P——r had professed his entire ignorance or forgetfulness of such an acquaintance as Captain Montague de Howard. "He certainly might have known him. There were a good many officers stationed in the town during a year. Was he in the cavalry or the infantry? True, more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows them;" and, not to do an uncivil thing, begged Mr. Bugsley to walk over his works. "Although," Mr. P——r added, "if I have shown him such civility, and he does profess such gratitude and friendship, I think it would only have been common politeness to have called on me in person, for even if not out of compliment to myself, at least to you, his friend, by a personal introduction."

The quarters and half-hours chimed loudly, and echoed through the coffee-room. Seven struck. Half-past sounded.

"Waiter! that gentleman come yet?" inquired Bugsley, quite faint from fasting.

"Your friend, sir? Left three hours ago. Electric telegraph message recalled him to London. Very sorry, sir, he was not able to stay. Left you his cold claret-cup, and hoped you would drink his health."

"Bring it, then, and dinner, directly, waiter," exclaimed Bugsley, in the most joyous tones. A fortunate circumstance had thus rid him of his curse; he felt the air thinner, his spirits to rise in proportion, and his

sorrows and ill-humour to fly apace to the winds, while Bugsley once more was himself again.

At nine o'clock the worthy gentleman called for a pair of slippers and a glass of brandy-and-water, and made himself up comfortably in the arm-chair for a good read at that day's *Times*.

"Beg pardon, sir. Master wished me to hand you your little account. Obliged to be particular now-a-days, sir, especially with strange gentlemen of limited luggage," said the waiter, most deferentially.

"Eh, sir? What do you mean? You don't expect a private individual to travel as an Eastern Sultan or a Nepaulese ambassador, do you?"

"No, sir; but a brown paper parcel is rather small, too," observed the waiter, insinuantly.

"Eh, what is this?" inquired Bugsley, not listening to him, and glancing over the bill. "Claret, twelve shillings; soda, a shilling; ice and sugar, sixpence. Why, I thought you said Captain de Howard left orders for me to drink this?"

"The gentleman did so, sir; but he also left injunctions you were to pay for it, sir. Best claret twelve shillings a bottle."

"Well, he is an impudent fellow, and you and your master a couple of —of—well, light me a bed-candle; show me the way to my room. Holloa! this is not mine—not my room," exclaimed Bugsley, as he was shown into a room with a brown paper parcel laying on the bed. "Where is my luggage—a writing-desk and portmanteau?"

"This is all you had, sir," said the boots, holding up the parcel. Your friend Mr. Bugsley had a writing-box and portmanteau, but he went by the 10.5 train."

"My friend Mr. Bugsley? I am Mr. Bugsley."

"No, sir; you are Captain Montague de Howard," said the boots.

"The deuce I am. Will you inform me, then, if I am in an hotel or a lunatic asylum? Are you the boots or a keeper? Answer me truly."

"The game is stale; ve veren't born yesterday, old boy. These mouching tricks von't do. However, here is Mr. Valker; I don't doubt he vill put you up to vere you are, and vere yer dinner and fine claret is," said the boots, as he shuffled out of the room at the approach of the landlord.

Bugsley entered into a lengthened statement with Mr. Walker; he protested and vowed his innocence; he repudiated his acquaintance or connexion with the individual who had levanted with his goods and money; he spoke to his own respectability as one of the largest teamen in the city of London; and ended by stating he was a victim to circumstances and a miserable fatalist, torn and shipwrecked by an adverse destiny, "unshunnable as death." Mr. Walker was incredulous, disbelieving, undeceivable, and great in the conceit of his own perception.

"Let us examine the paper parcel; it may lead to some clue, or throw some light on the subject," said Mr. Walker, and accordingly opened it; but it contained nothing besides an old toothbrush or so, which had been used in dying whiskers; a false pair of moustachios, three shirt-collars and a "dicky" shirt-front, except a few old play and hand-bills.

"The police had better be made acquainted with the case," said Mr. Walker. "Electric telegraph——"

"Oh! no—no—no—pray don't! Do anything with me you like.

Place me in the pillory, pelt me with rotten eggs; imprison me in a dark room without a fire; cut off all my remaining hair; starve me; plunge me into a cold bath; do anything with me, in short, but don't call the police," said Bugsley, in anxious tones, as visions of the baby and the Quaker flitted across his brain. "I will write to London; I will have remittances down here by the day after to-morrow, on my honour—on the honour of a British merchant—I will. Trust me, try me; do, kind sir."

Mr. Walker stared, coughed, and hawed. "Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift," we all know, but then this was an enigma as inexplicable as any of those of the monster sphinx, and would certainly require a modern Œdipus to divine its solution. Here was a respectable middle-aged gentleman, with candour and honesty delineated in every feature of his face, positively asserting he had been robbed of valuables to a considerable amount, in a most impudent and barefaced manner, by a casual acquaintance whom he had picked up by chance in a railway carriage, whom previously he had never seen or heard of, and yet so endued was he with the milk of human kindness, that he would not seek the invincible power of the law, with her satellites of detectives—officers and flashes of lightning—to bring the criminal to retributive justice. Mr. Walker argued within himself wisely, as becometh a great landlord and citizen of the world:—If he now handed Bugsley over to the police, peradventure he might prove innocent, and then, as a host, he would lose both caste and custom, and the keep of the tea-dealer for the next three days; whereas, was he to wait until the promised remittances arrived, he would have credit for temperance and mercy, four days' bed and board, and perchance a good customer for the future. He accordingly granted the specified time, taking care, however, a waiter or a boots should always follow in Bugsley's wake, to prevent an escape. This was mortifying and galling to a degree to an enlightened British subject—to a free and independent elector of the city of London, an alderman, and a reformer. It was an indignity to the cause of freedom, and a subversion of the rights of man. And was this our vainly boasted land of liberty? Pshaw. The espionage, however, continued for about four days, when the remittances arrived from town. Mr. Walker was profuse in his apologies; and Moses and Company supplied Bugsley, in five minutes' notice, with a new stock of ready-made linen and reach-me-down clothing, ground out of the flesh and blood of distressed needlewomen; and accordingly he started in the morning for the Lakes, for he knew full well it would be the crowning effect to the whole story, if, after all his troubles, he did not see the sights which he had left his snug retreat in Islington for. Girkins, his brother alderman, would joke him on it to his dying hour; while his old friend Barry, the ship-builder, would be sure to crack his nuts, his port, and the story, every Saturday night at the Mutton-chop Club; so, accordingly, Bugsley left on the morrow for Kendal, where he arrived without any adventure worthy of mention in this history; and having walked to see the ruins of the old castle, there memorable as the birthplace of the prudent Catherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII., he returned to his dinner in a private room, and having finished his soup, he began pulling away at the room bell to cause the appearance of the waiter and the first course.

"Beg pardon, sir; sorry to have kept you waiting," apologised the knight of the napkin, bringing in a heterogeneous mass of eatables on the jingling tray. "House really so full—never had such a busy week,

sir—sirloin of beef, yes, sir—superior bitter ale—yes, sir. Nearly all the nobility and gentry of the country here—titles and trade, sir—take potatoes, sir?—Lady Fitzgeorge and daughter; Sir Richard and Lady Steevens; Honourable Mr. Humorist; Dr. Colchicum; Mr. Bugsley, of Islington——"

Bugsley gave a shriek.

"Sir—sir—sir!" said the waiter. "Anything the matter, sir? Hurt, sir? Gout, perhaps, sir. Sudden spasm, perhaps, sir? Fit, sir?"

"*No*, sir!" thundered Bugsley. "Where is the man? Fetch the police. Where is *the* fellow—the swindler?—he calling himself Bugsley, eh?"

"Oh, beg pardon, sir; Mr. Bugsley left yesterday, sir, for York—highly respectable gentleman; very pleasant, very affable, sir. Read the name on portmanteau, sir."

"Have you lost any silver spoons or forks?"

"Well, to be sure, how news does fly, sir. So you have heard that story; master was very anxious to keep the affair quiet, sir. Very unpleasant these little matters in respectable establishments, sir. Sorry to say our boots, a quiet, inoffensive young lad, was committed for trial on suspicion. He was heard prowling about the house at a late hour. He says he was keeping company with our cook, and he went to meet her on the second landing of the back stairs, just to court her and drink a bottle of Dublin stout together. Cook was let off, sir; but she grew romantic, and wanted to share Dick's limbo; but the prison regulations don't admit of that—there is no particular provision for love, sir. Well, dear o' me! I would have trusted that lad with untold gold, sir. Pepper, sir? One is so deceived, sir, sometimes, it is so hard to read human nature. Cauliflower, sir?"

"Very hard indeed; and no one more easily deceived than yourself, I think. Where is the landlord?" inquired Bugsley.

"In the bar, sir."

"Tell him I will see him there in the course of half an hour, as I have something of importance to communicate. You may go now."

The waiter was a person of general and marvellous conversation, and the moment he heard Bugsley's last speech he vanished from the room, and rushed headlong into the bar, bursting with the news that either a detective policeman or a human magpie was up-stairs prepared to discover the lost or stolen plate, and, if necessary, publish the real robber to the world. The version of his interview with our friend was a mixture between the pages of the "Newgate Calendar" and the "Mysteries of Udolpho"—a beautiful blending of the criminal with the awful—until he so worked upon the feelings of his hearers, that mine host was all anxiety, his wife all alarm; the barmaid was certain she would see a spiritual apparition that night; and even the chambermaid feigned an excuse to tarry awhile that she might hear the revelations of the mysterious unknown.

"You have had a Mr. Bugsley, or rather a *ci-devant* Mr. Bugsley, staying in this house," said Bugsley, entering the bar.

"We have, sir," replied the landlord, as large drops of perspiration rolled down his face at the bare thought that, perhaps, he had harboured a murderer or a proscript.

"Know, then, that man is a swindler. He had the audacity to palm his acquaintance off upon me. He then robbed me of my luggage and

forty pounds in notes and gold, and, to crown all, has now the impertinence to assume my name and my business. I am Mr. Bugsley."

"Sir!" exclaimed the landlord.

"Lawk!" echoed his wife.

"Oh, me!" chorused the barmaid.

"Well, I never did!" added the chambermaid.

And they were all four about to throw themselves into a grand ballet de défaillance.

"It is my opinion that villain stole your forks and spoons; and, further, it is my opinion your servant is innocent."

Another attempt at a grand pas des quatres, with an incidental scream.

"Confound him!" said the landlord, in a rage. "He promised to sell me his best four-and-eight teas at three-and-two, and on the strength of that left two pounds in his bill unpaid. Hang him and his rascality too! I wish I could have it out of his dirty skin, that is all. And his stories of his East Indiamen, and cargoes, and what not, all gammon, I suppose?"

"And he promised me a funny idol from Pekin, and a real china tea-service from Nankin, the story-telling wretch!" screamed the landlady.

"And if he did not exactly promise to marry me, he did to take me to the Fancy Fair and to the Hip-hip-po-po-o-pot-a-mous—next year—in—in Lon-don. Oh!—Oh!—O!—O!—the wicked bru-te!" sobbed the barmaid.

"And he promised me a cherry-coloured velvet bonnet, with green ribands, and lined with yellow, if Voltigeur won the St. Leger; and told me a cock-and-a-bull story of its owner's housemaid betting on him and winning a fortune. But I don't believe such trash," said the chambermaid, with a verjuice turn of her nose.

"Well, if I could only see the hip-hip-po-po-pot-a-mous and the—the—glass-house—and Lon—Lon-don—and all the people—people—in it—I would not care which Mr.—Mr.—Bugsley took me," said the barmaid, as the tears coursed down her pink cheeks.

"Oh, me take you! No! I am a bachelor—a respectable single gentleman," said Bugsley, in horror. "I cannot take a young lady up with me to town. What would my family and friends think of my character and morals, young woman?"

"How indelicate, Miss Tomlins!" said the landlady. "I am quite shocked at you. Quite immodest to a strange gentleman."

"Oh! Lor-a-mercy on me, Charlotte! what are you a-thinking of?" exclaimed the right-minded chambermaid. "Go away with a man you ain't married to! Oh, fie!"

"Well, sir, then the natural inference is, that this person was the purloiner of my plate, and that my servants are innocent of the charge; but in absence of direct proof, sir, I rather doubt if the magistrates would release the lad at present without security for his appearance. However, sir, I myself will become bail for him, and we will correspond with the police authorities at York, and see if we cannot catch this gentleman," said the landlord.

"As to York, I fancy that is all dust to throw into your eyes," replied Bugsley. "However, I would freely stand twenty pounds to bring the blackguard to justice."

"He deserves worse than he will ever get," said the landlady. "Transportation is a deal too good for such as him."

"I would pull the rope with my own hands, if they would only hang

him," said the barmaid. "I could skin him alive, that I could, the nasty black-whiskered fellow."

Bugsley completed his tour: he visited Bowness, and sailed on Windermere; he tarried at Ambleside, and revelled for awhile among 'those sylvan glades and craggy heights ever immortalised by a Campbell's mind.

Part II.

It was some four months after the events which we have just narrated that Bugsley had occasion to go down Leadenhall-street. Stopping before a cook-shop, around which a train of hungry urchins and beggars were regaling themselves with the savoury steam from the stews and soups below stairs—in which, so far as any advantage was concerned, they had to draw a good deal on the imagination—and the day being frosty, and the appetite keen, and a fine juicy round of beef with plenty of gravy standing temptingly on the counter, our excellent friend entered the shop and ordered a mid-day "snack" from the same.

"Waiter! waiter!—Any turtle soup?" said a voice from a neighbouring box.

"No, sir; mutton-broth and ox-tail."

"Oh! no venison or boiled turkey, with celery sauce?"

"No, sir, no," replied the waiter, in a pet.

"No iced champagne, hock, or Moselle?"

"No, sir, you have come to the wrong shop for those articles; you must go further east. Do you want *anything*—eh, sir?"

"Yes, waiter. A sixpenny plate of beef—fat, thinly cut, and juicy—a red herring; one of bread; and a toothpick. Immediately."

Bugsley gave a start. There was no mistaking that voice: he could have told it among a million. There was a sharp, quick, commanding twang in it that would enable a person to swear to its possessor in any justice court in Europe. It must—it was Captain Montague de Howard—the swindler—the robber. His apparel was certainly much worse than before; his threadbare frock-coat fastened up to his neck, pins doing duty for buttons in many places, and showing no shirt; his old patched trousers, and his cracked boots; his long hair and careworn look, and now a fierce pair of moustachios; nevertheless, with all this, Bugsley knew his man again but too well for the other's comfort.

"Well, you robber, you villain, you swindler! Police!" screamed the tea-merchant, advancing towards the other.

"Hush—the baby!" said De Howard, holding up his finger. "Ah, Baggy, glad to see you—tol lol—eh? Sudden illness of my uncle—obliged to leave Manchester at a moment's notice. Badminton good, eh? Nice hotel! comfortable accommodation for man and beast, eh? Stupid boots gave me your kit, and in the hurry of departing did not see the mistake. Send my tiger in the morning with them to Prospect Cottage, Islington. You got my portmanteau, though; perhaps you will return it at the same time. The Begum's love-letters are in it, a tress of the Donna's ringlets, my Sobraon medal, my——"

"You infernal rascal, sir!—you paragon of assurance!—how dare you have the audacity to look me in the face, much less to utter that tissue of lies and glaring improbabilities?" said Bugsley, in a towering rage.

"Buggy! Are you lawyer enough to inform me if conspiracy is a transportable offence! and if so, whether you yourself are partial to iron

bracelets, Wellington Valley, and frieze clothing, together with the company of housebreakers, murderers, and thieves, eh?" said De Howard, with all the nonchalance imaginable.

"What, do you threaten me?"

"No, not me individually; only as an atom of that vast space—our country. Our laws are powerful. I see the axe raised—nay, even about to fall on your devoted head. Beware! Travelling in an omnibus with an elderly gentleman, a young lady, and their child—a fine little fellow. I was tempted, by a bribe of forty guineas, and at the instigation of the elderly gentleman, to place the child—his son—on a Quaker's lap, and together with him effect our escape to Manchester, eh?"

"False, sir!—false!—all false!"

"Je ne sais pas; but I do know the police courts are not quite so indifferent to matters. By-the-by, Buggy, you once had a clerk—Jacob Tinkley?"

"I had," said Bugsley, with a sigh.

"He is dead now. He was a good honest servant?"

"Very. I owe him a deep debt of gratitude."

"The devil you do! Then pay me. I am his son, heir, executor, assignee, &c.—all, everything—the last remnant of the house of Tinkley. You would not believe it, eh?"

"No, I certainly should not," said Bugsley.

"Fact, though. Prove it by the parish register of Bow Church. Under these circumstances, you owe the governor a debt. Well, you would not surely be so dishonest as not to pay him? and as you cannot very conveniently do so in person, make the draft payable to his naughty wild scapegrace son, William. Receipt in full given, and no questions asked; and if I return you your clothes and baggage, I shall expect mine; and then what crime have I done?"

"You stole the silver spoons at Kendal," said Bugsley.

"Did I! The law of libel has not been repealed yet, has it? Tinkley *v.* Bugsley. The learned judge summed up. The jury returned damages to the amount of one thousand pounds, which the judge most sagaciously commented upon, by observing those were mere nominal ones, as the defendant had been already convicted of felony and sentenced to transportation for conspiracy; consequently his estates and personals were confiscated to the Crown. Whew! old gentleman."

Now Bugsley, being about as ignorant of the laws of his country as the greater portion of its administers, and the outside of the Temple being the nearest approach to its mysteries he had ever attempted to explore; and Coke upon Lyttelton not being, like the phalacteries of the Jews, engraven on those walls, it may be safely said of him, "that though a very good man, he was a very bad lawyer;" and the words of his companion struck so deep into his heart that large drops of perspiration rolled down his forehead, and he buried his face in his hands in wild despair.

"Whew! old boy. Who is who, now? However, cheer up, and listen to me for a few seconds. I am tired of my present course of life; I want to reform; I am determined to become a respectable member of society, and I cannot do this in England. I am too well known. In Paris I am better known. And this year is the Exhibition of all Nations. Some of the French commissaires will most likely be over, and no doubt

accelerate my career to a crisis, or, in plain English—a prison. In three days a ship sails for Australia; pay my passage out, and give the captain five pounds, to be given to me when we have fairly left the harbour—for I know if I have it now I shall spend it—and I will never return to this country, and in the new one I will work honestly for my daily bread, and bring credit and respectability on myself and upon all that know me."

"Then you never were with the army in Spain or India?"

"Never further than the Knightsbridge Canteen in my life."

"Now tell me one thing in truth and honesty—was that woman your wife, or you know what? and was that your child? for, if it was, I will have it properly cared for and well brought up."

"On my honour, it was not. I never saw either woman or child in my life before."

"Well, then, I will do as you wish, and pray night and morning a wicked lost brother may profit in his new course, and strengthen his resolutions to improve the error of his ways."

"Thank you, thank you!" said the poor fellow, bursting into tears and clasping both Bugsley's hands; and then continued, in an altered tone, "I have insulted you—I have cajoled you—I have robbed you. I did steal the plate at Kendal. There are the pawn-tickets, which will fully exonerate the person whom they have apprehended, and there are those for your own clothes. I feel a different man already. I feel my spirits lighter, and as if I could look even you straight in the face, which I have never dared to do as yet; and would you but remember that you have this one consolation to repay you for all the annoyance and trouble I have entailed upon you—that is, my reformation and salvation without the aid of gallows or of prisons, I should be indeed a happy man."

Such a line of conduct on the part of Mr. Bugsley, we very well know, will be looked at in different lights by many. Our peers and *custodes rotulorum* and lord-lieutenants, no doubt, as a determined subversion of the rights of the Magna Charta and the overthrow of the laws of our realm; our country squires and justices, as an unparalleled trampling upon their power and prerogatives, with only the slight redeeming clause that the delinquent had never snared a hare or shot a pheasant; our female devotees will shudder at the idea of such a creature being loose between Belgravia and St. Barnabas; while our boarding-school misses would, no doubt, like the barmaid at Kendal, be ready to hang, skin, or quarter, such a perjuring wretch. The retired tea-merchant defied public opinion, and forgave his brother his trespasses. He paid the man's passage out to Australia, and gave the captain ten pounds to be given as requested; and as the light breeze filled the white sails of the *Africa*, as she rode out down the Thames, she bore on her decks Captain Montague de Howard, *alias* William Tinkley, bound for a foreign land and a new and more worthy career. The baby, we heard in a roundabout manner the other morning, was quite well, and growing apace, and is very shortly expected to be moved by the spirit: we need not say it is a Quaker. In conclusion, one moral let us draw for single elderly gentlemen.

ADVICE.—Never travel in an omnibus with a pretty girl and a baby. Avoid that as you would poison, and rather invest a shilling in a Hansom cab all to yourself, and you will never be infested with children or with swindlers. Adieu!

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

By the Rev. James Bandinel.

Chapter IX.

THE EXPEDITION.

On the day after that in which Sir Edred had been taken prisoner, everybody and everything at Arlstadt was in a state of commotion. Horses were shoeing; swords were sharpening; bows were stringing; and ladies were cutting off pretty little pieces of hair, and then moistening them with their tears. Things were getting so very melancholy that Alethè, though sick at heart, determined to hold a rural court on the margin of a beautiful lake, which lay about a mile to the westward of Arlstadt. In spite, however, of the beauty of the princess and her train, few of the male guests attended the summons; for those who were not themselves going on the expedition assisted their more fortunate companions in their preparations.

Sad as the princess felt, she could not but admire the exquisite beauty of the evening. The dark mountains rising behind her father's palace—the deep green forest bright with the most vivid hues of spring—the rose tint which the setting sun cast over the wide-arched sky, whilst his rays glittered in ruddy gold upon the soft, clear lake—all these made the scene and hour as beautiful as anything well could be. The birds, retiring to their rest, sang those farewell notes which have such a peculiarly plaintive character, whilst a troop of nightingales exerted the full power of their entrancing melody, as though seeking to cheer the sorrow and win the praise of the lovely princess.

It was not until she was just about giving the command to return that Eustace arrived, for he had been more busily employed than any one else, seeing that his troop was properly furnished and equipped. Alethè trembled as she gave him her hand, and a deep blush overspread her countenance. It was, however, impossible for anything to make her appear awkward; and, though strangely overcome, she looked more graceful as well as more beautiful than ever. The time was short, and the words were few which either said to the other; but ere they had parted to prepare for the banquet, though love had not once been mentioned, Alethè knew that she was loved—deeply, truly loved by Eustace; and Eustace hoped. Yes, he did not venture to feel secure; for what modest, pure-hearted, noble young man, under such circumstances, does feel so? But he hoped—fondly, gratefully *hoped* that he was loved in return.

The banquet wore a thoughtful and even sombre character. There were confidential dialogues, and general discussions, and calculations as to all that was likely to occur; but over all there was a deep gloom. The song of Acmaeus of Mytilene, for a few minutes, shed a bright sunshine through the murky atmosphere, but once more a deep shadow settled down upon the whole assembly, which even the wine-cup failed to dissipate.

The ensuing Sunday gave opportunity for many a fervent prayer

offered up for those who were about to start next day, and for protection against the Avars, whose certain advance was announced by credible messengers.

At length the morning of the departure dawned. It had been strictly commanded by Alured that all adieux should be got over on the preceding day, and his injunctions were so punctually obeyed, that though many a young warrior, as he mounted his charger, turned a longing glance in the direction of his lady-love, the expedition started precisely at sunrise.

On a magnificent war-horse, of great size and strength, rode King Alured in front of his army. His height was considerably above the average even of that age; his form was one in which manly strength and royal dignity combined; his eye bright and quick as that of a lynx; his arm strong in the strength of bodily vigour and mental energy. And as Arnold of the Brocken gazed on the monarch, he expressed the feelings of all who with him were gazing at the departing host as he said, "That is a king!"

And Eustace, as he rode at the head of his gallant band—ardent courage and loyal devotion beaming from his countenance—who could look upon him without feeling that he was indeed worthy to lead that valiant troop, worthy to fight under that noble leader!

During the first two days of their march they met with nothing worthy of remark. On the evening of the second day, after both men and horses had been baited, and scouts placed in every direction, the king called his principal warriors together, amongst whom were included Sir Eustace and the most distinguished of his band.

"I have summoned you," said Alured, "brave barons and noble knights, that I may lay before you the plan which I intend to pursue with reference to our enemies. Sir Hildebrand's conduct has been such as to place him without the pale of those courtesies of war which we are accustomed to extend even to the beast of prey. I shall therefore make an assault upon his castle without even a summons to surrender. Such a summons would indeed be useless, and worse than useless. You are aware that it is my intention to refuse quarter both to him and his felon followers. We cannot, therefore, expect him to surrender. A summons would only exasperate him, and induce him at once to murder his noble captive, my gallant deliverer (if, indeed, he has not done so already); whereas a surprise might leave him no time for vengeance. I therefore propose to move on to-morrow to within a short distance of Schreckenstein, to halt at noon, and, marching forward again at an hour after sunset, to advance silently and suddenly, and take the castle by storm."

A murmur of applause ran through the assembly as the king concluded, and turning to Sir Eustace he said, "Is there never a minstrel among us who will give us a warrior-song ere we go to our rest?"

"Not one, my liege," said Sir Arnulph of the Black Mountain. "Arnold of the Brocken, whose will is law with his brethren, said that not one of them should leave Arlstadt."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; he said that the Princess Alethè had need of them all."

"Well! be it so, then; another cup of ale: good; now to our couches."

The host moved forward next morning as had been determined, and halted at noon in a valley, which, though near Schreckenstein, was not

within view of the castle, where they refreshed themselves during the whole afternoon.

As the stars one by one attempted to show themselves through the fading hues of the summer even, King Alured set his troops in array, dividing them into three parties, with the design of attacking Schreckenstein simultaneously on three sides. Sir Eustace was to assail the castle on the north, Sir Arnulph on the south, whilst the main body, under Alured himself, was to attack the fortress in front. All seemed to prosper; the sky, which hitherto had seemed too clear for their purpose, became suddenly clouded: the different troops gained the stations assigned to them without eliciting any token of recognition: the signal was given—the trumpets blew—the war-cry sounded—and the castle was at once assailed on three sides.

No defenders, however, appeared on the walls—no defiance sounded—no alarm was given—the fortress seemed one vast tomb. Blow upon blow of mattock, bludgeon, and battle-axe fell upon gate and wall, but all in vain; after a certain number of strokes, they flew to splinters in the hands of the assailants. Ladders, and all the apparatus of an escalade, were now brought forward and applied to the walls; they were fastened without difficulty to the parapet, though some doubt had existed as to their being long enough for the purpose. Still there was no attempt from within to dislodge them.

Up rushed Sir Eustace and his gallant band; up rushed King Alured and his liege men; up rushed Sir Arnulph and his troop. The doors of a large room opened on the walls exactly opposite to the place where Eustace had mounted; a faint light glimmered in the apartment beyond—he rushed towards it; it moved rapidly away—rapidly he followed it; it crossed the drawbridge to the central tower—he crossed in pursuit of it; it ascended to the summit of the tower—he hurried after it; it began now to descend a flight of stairs—still he followed with unabated speed. He tried to pause, but it was impossible, the crowd of his followers pressing upon him in full career forced him forward; on, on they rushed with increasing rapidity, and so did the light which they followed. On, on, on it led them. Doors flew open with grating hinges—the steps became steeper and narrower—and now they went round and round like a corkscrew. The air became chill—the walls damp—the place grew darker and darker, and still they rushed on, impelled by an irresistible force, whether of internal desire or external compulsion they knew not; but on, on they rushed at headlong speed, pushing, crushing, trampling each other, till at length Sir Eustace, and those next behind him, heard the advancing tramp of their comrades under Alured and Arnulph. They made a last desperate effort to pause, but it was in vain. And now the atmosphere, though colder than ever, became close even to suffocation; their frames seemed dissolved; their knees knocked under them; the light was no longer visible. But still, on, on, on they rushed, like torrents impatient to reach the ocean, till on a sudden a trap-door opened beneath their feet, and they found themselves precipitated into a dungeon, the floor of which was covered with mud, and at least a foot deep in water.

Was it the beating of the water against the sides of the dungeon? or were those really bursts of strange wild mirth that prevented the king and his companions in sorrow from hearing each other's voices? Soon the sounds, whatever their origin, died away, and all eyes were attracted

towards a light which gleamed through an opening in the roof of the dungeon. They soon were able to distinguish the gigantic form of Sir Hildebrand, holding in his left hand a red lamp.

"I hope you are comfortable down there?" said he. "I always keep open house, and extend my hospitality to even unbidden guests."

"Villain!" cried Alured, "if ever I get out of this accursed stye I will punish thee for this foul deed of glamour."

"I have no wish to quarrel with my future father-in-law," replied he, "but I cannot avoid suggesting to your majesty, that the next time you attack a knight's castle, you do it by daylight, and after due summons."

"He says well," muttered Alured; "how could I be so devoid of common sense as to attack the stronghold of one who is in league with the powers of evil, by night?"

"Well," added Hildebrand, "good night, papa; you have had a long run, and require rest; pleasant dreams to you."

The indignant answer of the king, and the execrations of his followers, were again drowned by the strange sounds already mentioned; and at last, worn out by fatigue and fury, they all of them sank to sleep, having found a long ledge of rock, which ran parallel to one of the walls of the dungeon, whereon to stretch their limbs.

Far different was the condition of the small band of Sir Ernest of Arnheim, already known to our readers as leader of one of the parties on the first day's hunt. That aged and pious knight had been delayed some minutes by the careful repetition of his prayers. He always prayed regularly three times a day—the first thing in the morning, at noon, and at night, and he always prayed with especial fervour ere he rushed into battle; prayed for protection to himself and his band, prayed for the success of his troop, prayed most earnestly for the souls of those of either side whom the fate of war might summon to their dread account.

On the night of the disastrous assault, ere he had well concluded his orisons, the trumpet of attack sounded some minutes before the appointed time. In rising from his knees his foot became entangled, and he fell; this was another hindrance which might furnish subject of mirth to the scoffer. At length he set forth at the head of his troop; but as he approached the castle he heard strange murmurs heard by no one else, and distinguished a mystic melody rising from the centre of the fortress. He watched the battle-axes as they broke against the gates and walls, and noticed—for he was learned as well as pious—that they each splintered as they marked the number sacred to the evil power. And now, as the ladders were placed against the walls, he perceived long lean shadowy arms stretching forth from the battlements, fastening the ropes and irons to the parapet, and beckoning to the assailants to ascend; and as the king and his followers rushed up the ladders, ere Sir Ernest could stay him or them, he became fully assured that they were acting under the power of enchantment. He halted his troop, therefore, in front of the castle, but not within the deep shades of its gloomy walls, and commanded his followers to rest on their arms and wait the event. Indignant were they, we may well imagine; but such was the renown of the knight, such his rank and his authority, that they did not venture to disobey him.

At length, however, after they had remained in anxious expectation for upwards of three hours, as no evidence appeared that the castle had

been captured, an idea of the actual state of the case gradually glimmered upon those without, and all eyes were turned on the veteran warrior, whom all now looked upon as their only hope.

Sir Ernest's first care, now that the command devolved upon him, no less by seniority than by common consent, was to summon to his presence all those who had been sent off or left behind to gain intelligence, guard the baggage, or watch the passes; and having collected the whole of these, who amounted to about a third of Alured's original force, he called for a holy missionary, who had followed the camp, that he might have the opportunity of comforting the sick, shriving the dying, or gaining to the true faith by kindness in the hour of his agony some bold warrior who had scorned the peaceful Saviour in the day of his health, and requested him to chant the early service, with such additions as he might deem suitable to the emergencies of the occasion. The knights and their retainers joined in the service as far as they were able; but their attention was soon distracted by the strange sights and sounds which appeared to be elicited by this godly exercise. At first they heard wild laughter, then hollow murmurs, then yells of defiance, and lastly, groans of agony and shrieks of despair; whilst horrid and unmentionable shapes of barbarous and obscene wickedness sprang from the walls, and either took refuge in the innermost dungeons, or fled away wailing through the sky.

At length the sun arose; and no sooner had he bathed the ebon fortress with his golden light, than Sir Ernest and the priest advanced to one of the gates. The holy man attempted to draw the sign of the cross upon the magic portal; but ere he could effect his object, an arrow from a neighbouring loophole stretched him lifeless on the earth.

"Base villains!" cried the old knight, "we demand the instant liberation of our king and his train, or, if that be denied, we will remain here till succours arrive sufficient to drag every stone of your castle away by main force."

"Most devout knight and self-appointed generalissimo of the tinkers, tailors, and cowards of King Alured's army," replied Sir Hildebrand from a lofty battlement, "we will hold no parley with thee. Sir Alured, Sir Eustace, Sir Arnulph, and the rest of our gallant guests will partake of our hospitality until our envoy return from Arlstadt, for we are about to despatch a messenger to the prince regent, Sir Reginald, to treat of our nuptials with the Princess Alethè. We demand, therefore, a safe conduct for him from thy self-elected authority, and we warn thee to suspend hostilities until he shall have returned."

Sir Ernest was fain to allow the baron's request, since the delay which his acceding to it would cause might give time for succours to arrive. He promised, therefore, to give Sir Hildebrand's messenger a safe conduct, but without binding himself to abstain from hostilities.

FLORENCE HAMILTON.

By Miss Julia Addison.

AUTHOR OF "THE CURATE OF WILDMERE."

Chapter XVIII.

Loth was the other, and did faint through feare
To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steele.—*Fairy Queen.*

Wentworth arrived at Elysium-terrace punctually to the hour appointed by Silverdale, whom he found anywhere but in Elysium.

The small room on the second floor, to which the visitor mounted by a narrow staircase, was close and dark, and had a disordered and uncomfortable air. The poet—his rueful countenance resting on his hand—was seated at a rickety table strewed with books and manuscripts. He rose to receive Wentworth, and, after the exchange of a few civil speeches, said, tremulously,

"As the time is short, I will at once tell you my

Plain unvarnished tale,

if you will listen while I unfold

Unnumbered griefs, immeasurable woe."

He paused, and sighed; then added, abruptly, "In the first place, I am in love."

"I suppose so," said Wentworth, smiling; "for

Chamelions feed on light and air;
Poets' food is love and fame."

"True; aptly quoted. Well, then, I have a rival."

Wondering what this was to lead to, Wentworth waited for him to proceed.

"Which rival and I are going to fight."

"To fight!" repeated Wentworth, starting.

Silverdale related the circumstances of the quarrel, without stating the name of his future opponent.

"In applying to you in this matter," he continued, "I know that I address myself to one who never turned a deaf ear to distress—who never allowed the unhappy to plead in vain,—to one

Who, not content with that poor cordial pity,
Gives to a noble cause his heart, his arm, his strength,
His courage, valour, energies, and powers.

This, by-the-by, Captain Wentworth, is a quotation from 'Trombonius,'—a tragedy of mine in five acts. It is not published, but if you would like to read it in manuscript, I shall be happy to lend it you."

Wentworth bowed his acknowledgments of this kind offer, of which, however, he was fully determined never to avail himself, and reverted to the duel.

"Might not a meeting be prevented," he asked, "by the intervention

of some friend, who should signify that you would accept an apology? Your rival's anger has probably cooled by this time, and he may be glad to withdraw the challenge."

Silverdale shook his head.

"We must meet," he answered. "My dignity, my honour——"

"Would surely not be compromised by the course I recommend," interrupted Wentworth.

"He would think me cowardly were I not to meet him," persisted the poet. "I have no objection to my second making overtures of peace on the ground, though I think it most unlikely they will be accepted. May I congratulate myself on having found a friend to aid me in this doubtful shock of arms?"

"Why, really," said Wentworth, "I feel most unwilling to involve myself in an affair of this sort, and——"

"Oh, do not—do not refuse me!" cried the poet, piteously; "I am lost, ruined, undone if you do. Upon my honour, I have not another friend to whom I can apply."

"My dear sir," said Wentworth, moved by his evident distress, "if this is the case, of course I will not refuse; but I own that I accept the office with great reluctance."

Silverdale grasped his hand in speechless gratitude.

"You have not yet told me the name of your rival," said Wentworth.

"Sir Robert Craven!" he repeated, when Silverdale had informed him; "then I fear, indeed, there is small chance of a reconciliation."

He fell into a reverie as to whether Florence could be the lady to whom Silverdale alluded. The poet presently roused him by saying:

"I try to persuade myself, Captain Wentworth, that

> There is nothing either good or bad,
> But thinking makes it so.

Yet still I cannot contemplate this duel with anything like calmness. It is not that I fear death—it is not the thought that I shall, in all probability, be

> Cut off e'en in the blossom of my days—
> No reckoning made, but sent to my account
> With all my imperfections on my head,

which appals me, but it is the idea that I may be forced to leave the world before I have achieved deathless fame—before I have placed my name for ever in the records of the illustrious of the earth, that makes me ready to exclaim with the royal spectre—

> Oh, horrible! oh, horrible! most horrible!

There is still a favour I have to request of you, Captain Wentworth. If one of those

> Leaden messengers, that ride
> Upon the violent speed of fire,

should 'fly with *true* aim,' and, striking this faithful breast, put a sudden end to all the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, of this too susceptible heart, oh! execute my last wishes—carry this letter to her

> Whose looks are my soul's food;

bid her cherish the remembrance of him who loved 'too fondly and too well;' bid her lament, and shed 'the tender tear,' although

> Her *Cynthius*, wrapped in everlasting sleep,
> Can neither hear her sigh nor see her weep;

tell her, that his last faltering accents breathed her name; that, had he lived——Oh! Captain Wentworth, I can bear no more. The sad re-reflection overcomes me—

> I am lost in mournful thinkings.

By this time to-morrow, I may be

> Cold as the deathlike, icy, marble stone,
> That in the silent, dismal, drear churchyard,
> Oft marks a once loved lost one's last lone resting-place,

as *Trombonius*, my hero says, when he poisons himself and his whole army in despair, on hearing that *Tofania*, his lady-love, has entered a convent."

As the poet paused for breath, Wentworth endeavoured, without wounding his feelings, to remind him that there were other thoughts more worthy to engage his attention at a period when he believed his life to be in danger, and that he might shortly be in a state which would make the world and all its pleasures, pursuits, and ambition, appear as vanity. Silverdale seemed affected for a moment; but though he listened with apparent attention to his friend's kind and earnest observations, Wentworth feared he had made but little impression, for almost as soon as he ceased speaking the poet fell into another rhapsody.

Wentworth sighed as he thought how difficult, how almost impossible it is suddenly to call forth true religious feelings in those with whom such feelings are not habitual—in those who, to use the beautiful and expressive language of the Psalmist, "have not God in all their thoughts;" whose hearts do not, as by a natural impulse, turn to Him for comfort in all their sorrows, and in gratitude for all their happiness.

Our hero was roused from these reflections by hearing his companion say,

"As to this affair of the duel,

> The trust I have is in mine innocence;

and my comfort is in the kind words, good wishes, and bright eyes of my lady-love. Oh, Captain Wentworth, were the fair Florence unkind, I should be

> As with furies surrounded,
> Despairing confounded,

instead of calmly prepared to meet

> The dread encounter and the awful trial.

But I fear you have not yet recovered from your illness: you look pale. Can I offer you anything?"

"No, thank you," replied Wentworth. "Did you say that Florence—I mean Miss Hamilton——"

"Loved me?" continued the poet. "Thank you for your kind interest in the affair. She has not yet told me so. But she has given me strong reason to think that I am honoured with her preference. In my heart, I believe that she feels for me a stronger interest than that of mere friendship."

"It is so, then," said Wentworth to himself. "Miss Trimmer was right in what she said of her character. And Florence, whom I believed as near perfection as any human being could be, is that odious and contemptible thing—a coquette."

While Wentworth's mind was occupied with these thoughts, Silverdale ran on, lamenting his unhappy fate in being obliged to fight a duel which might prematurely deprive the world of his genius, and expressing the extreme readiness he should feel to die but for this reason, until a neighbouring church clock, chiming half-past seven, reminded him that it was time to start for Sedgefield Common, which was about a mile beyond the outskirts of the town.

"I have yet one or two little preparations to make," said the poet, nervously. "This letter to seal and direct, and a few manuscripts," he added, with a faltering voice, and almost in tears, "which I should like to —to take a last look at. If you will wait for me here a few moments I shall be greatly obliged, or walk on and I will follow you, calling in my way for the surgeon whom I have asked to accompany us."

He retired to a little inner room, and Wentworth, preferring the fresh air to a close and heated apartment, chose the latter alternative. Quitting the small, lonely, straggling street, he proceeded slowly along a narrow suburban road, which presently brought him out into a broad turnpike one. All was hot, dusty, and stagnant. Not a leaf stirred, nor was there even a solitary coach or traveller passing. A short distance on was a stile leading to some fields, through which a but little frequented footpath conducted to Sedgefield Common. Here Wentworth paused, and, leaning on the stile, stood for some minutes awaiting Silverdale. A hurried footstep coming in the opposite direction from the town caused him to look up and see Pemberton.

"You here, of all people, Wentworth!" exclaimed his friend.

"I might say the same to you," answered Wentworth, with a slight smile. "Where do you come from?"

"From an early dinner party. I have just dismissed my brother's carriage, as I have an appointment to meet a person near here."

"An appointment! How strange!"

"You would think it still more strange, my dear fellow, if you knew all. To own the truth—which I would not do to any one but yourself —I am about to be involved in a very unpleasant affair."

"What! You are not going to be Craven's second, are you?"

Pemberton's exclamation of surprise was followed by a mutual explanation; and then an anxious and earnest discussion on the quarrel and its probable consequences.

"I regret extremely that you and I have been drawn into the business," said Pemberton. "Sir Robert is so violent and implacable, that I feel sure all our attempts to settle the affair quietly will be fruitless."

"We will do all we can," said Wentworth. "Is Craven a good shot?"

"Capital. I have often practised shooting at a mark with him."

"And Silverdale never fired a pistol in his life."

"Sir Robert knows that, and is quite ready to take advantage of it. He is not a really brave man."

"No one so intensely selfish can be. Where are you to meet Sir Robert?"

"At the corner of the lane a little further on. As he comes in his carriage, we take the circuitous route, instead of the short cut across the fields. I merely walked up and down here because I was rather too soon. Well, we must hope for the best, as kind friends always advise one to do in desperate cases. It will be time enough to be miserable when Craven has killed Silverdale, and Charles Wentworth and Adolphus Pemberton are arrested and indicted for aiding and abetting the crime of wilful murder. With which cheerful prospect I will for the present bid you farewell."

Chapter XIX.

But here upon this earth beneath,
There is no spot where thou and I
Together, for an hour, could breathe.

Lord Byron.

It was a sweet and lovely scene, and one peculiar to England—a wild, lonely common; in some places gay with purple heath, sweet-scented thyme, and the bright golden flowers of the prickly furze; in others covered with a rich carpet of smooth green turf, while here and there the ground was broken into rugged and picturesque irregularities.

The calm stillness of evening reigned around—not a leaf stirred, not a sound broke the peaceful silence. No human habitation was visible; there was nothing to mark the presence of man or man's hand; the spot, in all probability, remained precisely as it had been for ages, unchanged and undisturbed. Suddenly the solitude was invaded by two young men, who, their minds apparently absorbed in some weighty matter, walked to and fro with hurried yet cautious steps, occasionally pausing and looking around, as though watching for some one who did not appear.

"What the devil do those two fellows mean by keeping us waiting in this manner?" presently exclaimed one of them in impatient and angry tones. "We must have been here full half an hour!"

"No," said his companion, glancing at his watch, "we have not been here ten minutes yet, and it wants five of the appointed time."

"You are wrong," said the first speaker. "I tell you it is past eight."

"Have it as you will," was the rejoinder. "I am in no humour to dispute with you."

"Well, well, don't be angry, Pemberton; I shall hit him, I am sure I shall; I'll bet you twenty to one upon it. Will you take the wager?"

"No!" replied Pemberton, quite disgusted, and not attempting to conceal his feelings.

"Well, by Heaven!" cried Sir Robert, after a short pause, "this is really too bad of Silverdale. Confound him, why don't he come?"

"Don't swear, Craven. He must be here in a minute. Yes, I see him now getting over that gap."

Wentworth and Silverdale were accompanied by a surgeon, a very young man, who looked much frightened and extremely nervous. Bowing somewhat distantly to Craven, Wentworth drew Pemberton a little on one side and said,

"I am commissioned by Mr. Silverdale to offer his sincere apologies for his share in the unfortunate dispute which occurred this morning, and to say that, if Sir Robert will recal the hasty words he made use of,

Silverdale is ready to forgive the affront he received, and to shake hands with his intended antagonist."

Pemberton went up to Sir Robert, and spoke with him for some minutes, at the end of which time he returned to Wentworth, who saw, by the expression of his face before he spoke, what was the result of this overture.

"Craven will not accept Silverdale's apology," said Pemberton, "though I have used every argument in my power; nor yet admit that he was at all to blame."

Wentworth communicated this to Silverdale.

"There is nothing for it but fighting, then," said the poet, changing colour, but making an effort to speak with firmness,

"And so defend me, Heaven, and my valour!"

"Come, come," said Sir Robert, "do not let us lose any more time; but measure the ground, and let us proceed to business."

The seconds stepped out twelve paces, and having loaded the pistols, were about to place them in the hands of their respective principals, when Wentworth exclaimed,

"Stay a moment, this arrangement will not do. Silverdale will have the sun directly in his face."

"Nonsense," said Craven, impatiently. "The sun is all but set; it can make no difference."

"Pemberton, will you tell Sir Robert he must not interfere," said Wentworth.

"He is right," said Pemberton, addressing the baronet. "You must leave it to us."

"But he has no right to make a delay about nothing," said Craven, who was aware of the advantage of his own position.

"Come beside me for one moment, Pemberton," said Wentworth, "and you will see that a person placed here would have a great disadvantage."

"Certainly," said Pemberton. "He would be completely blinded. Let us measure twelve paces in a different direction."

Sir Robert muttered an oath.

"Now you may take your places," said Pemberton.

"Captain Wentworth, accept my warmest gratitude for all your kind solicitude and your exertions in my cause," said the pale and trembling Silverdale. Mr. Pemberton, I thank you also—allow me to shake hands with you."

The pistols were presented to them. Sir Robert looked fierce and full of confidence; Silverdale's hand was so unsteady that he could scarcely hold his pistol. The seconds drew back, and the signal was given. The rivals fired at the same moment. Silverdale instantly fell. Sir Robert uttered a cry of pain, and dropped his pistol.

"Come this way," he cried to the surgeon, "and see what is the matter."

The surgeon obeyed, and found that Silverdale's ball had lodged in his right arm.

"Let Mr. Smith come here," said Wentworth, who was standing beside Silverdale.

"Good God! he is not killed, is he?" said Pemberton, looking at the

unfortunate poet, who lay perfectly senseless, his countenance ghastly pale, and half covered with blood.

The surgeon examined him, and soon announced that he was not seriously hurt. The bullet had grazed his forehead, and he had swooned, probably from the fright.

"I wish we had a little water," said Mr. Smith.

"I think I can get some," said Pemberton. "There is a brook not very far off."

"Only a scratch on the face," said Sir Robert. "I am sorry he has got off so easily. Hang it, how painful my arm is!"

Mr. Smith recommended him to return to his carriage, and he was in the act of departing, accompanied by the surgeon, when a faint and half-suppressed cry of alarm made him pause and look round. Wentworth looked round also, and beheld within a few yards of him, her hands clasped, and her face pale with surprise and terror at the scene which met her view, the figure of Florence Hamilton.

Before he had recovered the presence of mind of which the sight of this unexpected apparition had for a few seconds deprived him, a loud chorus of female screams was heard, and a moment afterwards, Lady Louisa Tufton, closely followed by Miss Trimmer, the three Misses Mumford, their cousins, and little Adela, came over a gap in a neighbouring hedge, and joined the group.

On seeing the melancholy condition of the hapless Silverdale, Lady Louisa, with the most frantic gestures and lamentations, threw herself on the ground by his side. The rest of the party stood still and speechless, with the exception of Miss Trimmer, who ran from one person to another, pouring forth vociferous exclamations of surprise and concern, which no one listened to, and asking innumerable questions, which no one answered.

In a few moments Sir Robert approached Florence, and, pausing at a short distance from her, said,

"Miss Hamilton, you are just come in time to witness a scene of bloodshed and confusion; and, let me tell you, that it is all owing solely to you—to your heartless coquetry. You—you are the cause of all!"

Having said these words he turned away, beckoned to the surgeon to follow him, and was departing, when Florence exclaimed,

"Stop, Sir Robert! What can you mean? I the cause of this! Explain yourself, I beg, I command you!"

"There is no need of explanation," said Craven. "It is enough to say—yes, and I repeat it—that you were the cause of this quarrel. You might at this moment have had the loss of two lives to answer for."

"Good gracious, how shocking!" exclaimed Miss Mumford, who, like all the rest of the ladies, thought that Silverdale was dead.

"Mercy upon us, how dreadful!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla Mumford.

"I am sure there is some mistake," said their sister Gertrude.

"Oh, unhappy day! Oh, hour of thorrow and mithfortune!" cried Miss Trimmer, wringing her hands pathetically. "Oh, my dear Florenth!"

"It is false!" exclaimed Florence. "I know nothing of your quarrel. Sir Robert, it is wrong, unpardonable of you to say so."

"I say the truth," replied Craven, doggedly, and again turning to depart.

"Sir Robert!" cried Florence, "I insist on being told what you mean —on having my character vindicated."

"I will tell you, then," said Sir Robert, approaching a step nearer. "Can you deny that you gave that man a rose—one of my roses—this morning? Answer. Can you deny that? You gave it him as a proof of your favour!"

"As a proof of favour!" repeated Florence. "I *do* deny it most positively. I admit that I gave Mr. Silverdale a rose when he asked for one; but only out of politeness, and as a matter of course, because he seemed to wish for a flower. And now, what connexion has this with your quarrel?"

"Only this," retorted the baronet—"that it was the sole and entire cause of it."

"Sir Robert!" cried Florence, much distressed, "this is absurd—impossible!"

"It may be so," said Craven, ironically, "but I must be allowed to have my own opinion on that subject. And now I can stay arguing no longer, for my arm is dreadfully painful. Come, Mr. Smith."

"I never heard anything to equal this in all my life," said Miss Mumford, as Sir Robert walked away.

"Nor I," said Miss Priscilla.

"It ith, indeed, incomprehenthibly extraordinary, and harrowingly dithtracting," said Miss Trimmer, with yet greater pathos. "Oh! my dear Florenth!"

Florence turned from them to Wentworth. Her earnest, inquiring, yet timid glance, said, as plainly as a look could say, "May I have the consolation of knowing that *you* do not believe Sir Robert's accusation—that you do not think me heartless or a coquette?"

Wentworth understood the appeal, and coldly averted his eyes when she fixed hers on his face. Grieved and disappointed, for this slight but expressive action told his feeling as well or better than words, Florence stooped hastily down, and seemingly occupied herself with her little sister, that he might not see how much she was affected by this unkindness from one who, she not unnaturally thought, should have known her character better than to be so easily prejudiced against her.

Before she had had time to dwell long on these reflections, her attention was drawn to Lady Louisa Tufton, who continued to lie weeping on the ground, notwithstanding the efforts made by the Misses Mumford and Miss Trimmer to raise her up and comfort her.

Wentworth now discovering, from an exclamation she uttered, that she believed Silverdale to be dead, hastened to undeceive her. He had scarcely done so, when they heard the sepulchral-sounding voice of the poet faintly exclaim,

"Where am I, Heaven?—on earth again!"

and that gentleman, slowly raising himself from his recumbent position his face and hair besmeared with blood, opened his eyes, and gazed around him with a half-stupified air. Lady Louisa uttered an exclamation of joy, and sank back in a graceful and picturesque attitude into the arms of Miss Trimmer. Still confused, and doubtful as to the reality of the objects he saw around him, Silverdale, whose mind was so imbued with poetry—good, bad, and indifferent,—and who was so accustomed to

express all his feelings in verse, that it had become more natural to him than prose, exclaimed, in the words of Lord Byron,

"Do I breathe:
Can this be still the earth beneath,
The sky above, and men around?"

At this moment two other personages made their appearance. One was Mr. Simon Mumford, the other a tall and fashionable-looking man of about five and forty, whose manners and bearing were characterised by extreme self-importance. His countenance was disagreeable, almost repulsive, both in features and expression. The eyes were grey and piercing, with something sinister and underhand in their glance; the nose was long and hooked; the mouth and lower part of the face coarse and ill-formed. His thick, stiff black hair was curled and arranged with scrupulous care, as were also a large pair of whiskers, whilst the style of his dress betokened vanity and love of display.

Wentworth was the first to perceive the new comers, who were advancing towards the group of which he formed a part, from the same direction that Florence and the rest of the ladies had followed a short time before.

But what crowds of varying emotions, of painful feelings, did the sight of this stranger awaken in his mind. The image of his fondly loved mother, dying forsaken and broken-hearted, was before him; he saw again in imagination the halls of his ancestors; dim recollections of his childhood, of the sorrow which had clouded his early youth—all thronged upon his memory, chasing each other in quick succession like the indistinct and flitting visions of a feverish dream.

"What can bring this man here, and how am I to behave towards him?" Wentworth asked himself, when the first surprise was over. "What strange chance has thus thrown us together? He has not yet observed me. That is fortunate. I should have been sorry had he witnessed my agitation. Would I could avoid him—but that is impossible!"

To Wentworth's great relief, however, the stranger, though he eyed him for nearly half a minute in a sharp and scrutinising manner, did not acknowledge their previous acquaintance by word or look.

"How well he dissimulates," said Wentworth to himself. "Who would think, from his behaviour, that he and I had been for years inmates of the same house,—that he had sworn eternal friendship to me? Well, whatever may be the cause, I am thankful to him for behaving thus, for it spares me some embarrassment; and perhaps it is better that we should appear strangers."

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

The Vestibule.

Chapter VI.

Seated in a small octagonal room, in each compartment of which there were bookshelves sunk within cedar panels, with a few cabinet pictures ranged on each side of them, we spoke of Dione. The conversation changed; I praised Adora for her faith and love in yielding herself up to my protection; and as she listened to these things her eyes beamed with delight; the union of smile and sigh expressed the bliss which such allusion caused her to feel. Our joy was unalloyed, except when at times, like a sudden breeze passing over ripening corn-fields, a bitterness stole over the memory of my career; and even that was palliated within my conscience by good resolutions respecting the future: the shade, as it passed, hastened on by the forth-bursting light of Adora's smile, which was rarely long absent.

I learned that the cousin of Æthra, the cavalier introduced to me as such, was her lover—that first lover of whose early connexion with her affections she had recounted the history. She had poured the same narration more than once into Adora's ear, which showed her to be a woman of loose tongue, and in whose mind the idea of love was ever foremost. Her reserved yet attractive manners towards men were with her the glow-worm's lamp, nightly held forth to light the lover to her bower.

I seized this opportunity to apprise Adora of the particulars of my life, impelled by conscience to cement our union by mental bonds, none of which are stronger than those of confidence. Similar feelings and opinions form strong ties, but they are ties of sympathy only—the heart's function; while confidence, by the constant contact of heart itself with heart, gives rise to both union of substance and identity of soul.

In these confessions, however, my history was not the same as that which the searching affinity of Pulci's eye for sin had drawn from me: oh, that full-orbed gaze of sorrow when I made omission of the truth! It was irresistible. Its excessive purity drew out of me the wickedness entire, and seemed to neutralise it as it came forth, as a poison is made inert by some innocuous element. Such is the virtue of a confessor like Pulci, whose look was as a glass in which the sinner rejoiced to reflect his entire being, and in words to verify the image; whose smile was the will of the holy. He inherited the spirit which whispered, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I acknowledge that the confessions I made to Adora were not like what I poured into his ear. When I narrated my life to her, I boasted not of vain motives; I dared not; but told the whole as a history of my misfortunes. My passion for the good and beautiful—for herself, engendered in me so intense a desire for the possession of those qualities in myself, that, as I told my tale, I avoided and shuddered at what had really happened, and adopted the language of that which should have been. I felt that I might ever have acted rightly; that the light to have done so had been within me, though I did wrong; and therefore to acknowledge the

wrong would have been to emblazon my worse deeds to the injury of my better nature, and give Adora a false impression of my character through pictures, drawn after—not itself—but its lamented errors.

Such, then, was my sophistry; I was in a state of transition, though it was my glorious passion for the pure Adora which led me into self-deception. She listened to me with the white garment of sinless love thrown over her; through her I ascended from the appreciation of human, to that of divine beauty; taught, as I advanced, a new adoration of things good, and ever, as I related, I received from her a sense of right—a sense accordant with my more exalted spirit, and its deep foundations. I ought to have then told the truth—to have acknowledged her beneficial influence upon me, and have repented of the evil before appropriating the good; but I could not; my wickedness was too monstrous and incredible; and as I saw it not all in the dark hues I see it now, but rather still perceived some loftiness of purpose in the midst of it, might I not even have boasted, and have thus doubly degraded myself before one in whose eyes I aspired to rise too high?

I have hardly yet explained my state of mind. In the world we observe ourselves daily indifferent in our behaviour towards those of small repute, but anxious to appear to best advantage before the great. When we are to meet the learned, we are apt to prepare ourselves to converse with them; and what we have acquired to-day, to pass off as a part of our old stock of knowledge. So with the good as with the learned, the virtues we appreciate to-day for the first time, we apply to the past, as if their origin were immemorial.

Intellectual crimes are the most immoral after all! The crimes of sentiment are disguised by emotion, and sometimes not discovered until too late; the impulse which accompanies them seems their natural guide; but the intellectual crime, cold and visible, is not committed involuntarily, nor is it unperceived at the time of its perpetration.

To my evil genius, Thanatos, I could even at that time have made a parade of vice; him I still hated; but to Ippolito, my genius of good, I could never have told a lie; I had no motive to raise myself in his good opinion; he was as a child to me. I was therefore silent before him, except when genuine truth had occasion to gush from my breast. How strange was the position of Adora between these!

Thus I proceed with my life, the longest work I have ever written; the task, like a delicious soliloquy in which the reaction of being surpasses the action in enjoyment, coming back in a gentle stream, no longer wearing its toilsome way through rock, no more the devotion of to-day to the discovery of to-morrow, but a history complete; a testimony of independent existence in the past; the procession of a soul over a plain of shadows, where the form is recorded in the void.

The pen is a companion; instinct with power, like a wand it conjures up the forms of thought, and in a moment the chamber of memory is like a hall at sunrise, exchanging its shadows for armed knights, on whose unconscious grandeur the grey light glances. In that chamber the thoughts appear; they are there again, not wavering as of old, not altered by persuasive look, nor by magic-teeming word; not lured by pleasure, but unchangeable thenceforth.

How necessary to happiness is the past; better almost would man be with no idea of the future than without memory! He to whom the future were a blank would inhabit the past with backward hope; would offer up

his prospects to antiquity, and find a paradise in classic land, still looking behind at the eternal.

My life, as it returns upon me, comes back like music heard in sleep: the harmony ever consistent amid the most varied intonation, the plaintive notes bursting forth as with surprise. Grief now prevails; it is deep and unpresuming; now it vanishes, and is a silence, such as might have created worlds! A few soft murmurs sigh; they sigh again; and a new silence holds hope suspended in its breath. The tale begins, and sorrow becomes grander than before, in the midst of dissonant anguish and reproof; it stops, and sorrow is felt alone. Then persisting once more through the reviving war of sounds, it has power to enforce its melody: the louder the discord which pursues it, the more irresistible is its appeal. Oh, gentle strain to be so ravishing that the invisible heart is thus stolen!

My life from first to last was thus elevated and sustained: it returns upon me as I write, not as it appears to the vulgar who peruse, a mere narration, but, like a continual hymn, such as fills the mind of mighty composers while they mark down in silence their wondrous music.

Chapter VII.

"Where is Ippolito?"

"Not yet returned from Florence," said Adora.

I paced the room with inquietude; for some days past I had been expecting my brother and Musonio, in quest of whom the former had left the castle. My labours were interrupted, my health began again to suffer, and I was restless to pursue the inquiry which the discovery of the sphinx had suggested.

"Let us walk to the village, and visit the wives of the peasants," said Adora, who saw my uneasiness.

We set out at once on our walk, taking the road by the convent, a building which was about a mile distant, and crossing the water to the heath on which the village stood.

"See you that figure at the cottage door?" I said.

"My eyes have been fixed on it for some minutes," replied Adora.

"I know that man of powerful frame—of eye restless and piercing, of head and face the finest ever seen—it must be he."

"To whom allude you?"

"You know him, too; he saw you in your childhood, and was the first who brought your name to Italy—the first to utter it in your brother's ear."

"You excite my curiosity in speaking so of one who has not yet turned his face this way; and even now he disappears without regarding us."

"He has seen us though he has not looked; he has used the eyes of others. I see it in the manner of his disappearance."

"Who is this stranger?"

"One whom I love, but dread to see; yet he will come when least expected, and go when most desired to stay."

"Should I know his name?"

"His name may have been never known to you; he tells it to few."

"What sort of man is this of whom you speak so strangely?"

"He is kind, without showing sympathy; clever, without being vain; and strong, without display; he loved Giuditta."

We reached a cottage; Adora, observing my agitation, had allowed the topic to drop. We entered the door; absorbed in painful reflections, I failed at first to notice that it was a house which I had twice visited—once with my mother, and on the same day with my father, when, as if in anticipation of my taste for living art, I conducted him to the presence of a dying mother, whose child lay dead in her chamber. All traces of that scene were swept away, except in the record which nature had made of it upon the page of memory—a page which in me was illustrated in enduring colours. It was a melancholy revival of days ever young, though of old, and I dwelt not on it long. I looked inside, where stood a woman whose face and limbs were withered, and whose blighted eyes had only the vacant look of blindness left; she rose to salute us, advancing obliquely, with upraised palm, to the door at which we lingered.

"Oh, it is the dear young lady," said the crone, as she stood on tiptoe, and peered into Adora's face; "bless her, for she has given me my daily meat and drink. I am well now; but before she came, the flesh was melting from my breast."

As she said this she patted her chest, and drew in a deep breath, while the look of her eye became still more abstracted than before.

"May our Holy Lady bless you! I am quite well now, and will take no more physic from that wicked man. Last night," pursued she, in a whisper, "I had a vicious dream. Methought my doctor came, and he must bleed me. Now, listen;—he tied my arm and cut me; the blood spurted to the ceiling—and that meant slander; for when he has cut me before the blood would never come."

She remained mute and motionless for a time, when her lips again moved.

"Slander is bad," said the crone; "but I still slept, and next I dreamed that a woman came to pay me money, but instead of silver she brought it all to me in copper coins; so I said to myself, I know what this all is—it means deceit. And when I awoke I said to myself—deceit and slander. I know what this all means; the neighbours are jealous because the lady has brought me meat and drink. So away they go to the dear good lady to blacken me in her eyes, and that is slander; and away they go to the wicked doctor, and persuade him to poison me; that is deceit."

And her mouth foamed from excitement as she spoke.

"They want me away, but I have found them out in my dream."

We in vain endeavoured to assure her she was mistaken; the delusion had taken fast possession of her mind.

To divert her from the subject I inquired her age.

"Why I will tell you," replied she; "I am two years older than my dear brother, and when he was killed he was twenty-five, and that is thirty years ago."

"How was he killed?"

"There were only us two left," she said, in reply to my question; "he was a fine young man, and always so good to me. He was a soldier, so brave and so fond of his duty; and, poor fellow, he used to look so well! He had a fine horse—a noble, spirited horse—and he was riding, and fell backwards while his horse reared; and the beast came back with him, and fell on his poor breast, and that broke his heart."

I concealed the emotion which her narrative caused me, and inquired who the person was who had just left, for the aspect of the man still haunted my thoughts.

"Nobody knows who he is, or where he comes from. He has been here for many weeks. He lives with the cottagers hereabout, and goes into the fields with the men. He sleeps on the floor, and often in the open air. He talks as we do, and not like my lord and lady. He makes us tell him all that we have ever heard, all the nonsense that our fathers told us, and their fathers before them; for nonsense it is, my lord and lady, though every word is true. And he asks us to sing to him the songs which we learnt in our childhood."

At this moment he appeared—it was Angus.

"I have seen your sphinx," said he, without salutation; "you have some curious remains hereabout, and they are worthy of your attention. The old Etruscans lived in great numbers within these parts, and they buried their dead in splendour. If you search, you may depend upon finding some of their tombs here. I hear, however, that you are about to excavate in quest of these very sepulchres." He added, "It is my intention to be with you shortly." He then walked away, without looking round, and ere long disappeared among the trees.

"He heard about that from some of our people," observed the old woman. "The shepherd who lives next door told him that the old folks used to say we were living on the top of the graves of those whose dress and language were different from our own; and said that there were bits of their spears and monuments in the stream. When he heard all this, he mounted his beautiful horse, and no one saw him more for many days; when at last they found him in the torrent, near the north steps of the castle, taking large stones out of the water, and looking into them as if they had been alive."

I took leave of La Carita, for such was the beldame's name, and walked towards home with Adora, my breast disturbed by emotions not a little various; not mortified at the abruptness of Angus, whose nature I understood, but thoughtful of the injury I had done him unawares.

I had been suddenly penetrated with a deep interest in that old woman, La Carita. As she told her plain tale, and gave expression to honest feelings, I looked at her intently, and said, "What is there here to excite Adora's love?" I looked at the features, withered up prematurely; at the departing vision of her eyes; and began to get a glimpse of what it was that acted magically on another's heart, though little at the time on mine. All about her, poor soul! had gone into neglect and decay, but she was of our race. The forehead was such as only deathless soul could occupy; the eyes, though almost untenanted, were shaped on the human model; the nose, the mouth, the chin, the cheeks, all these differed but in age from what is most lovely to behold. As I still looked, sympathy—a feeling ever expressive of relationship—crossed my heart. I knew well that God loved that woman, and I determined not to take my eyes from her until I felt the reason why He did so—the reason why Adora also loved her. I looked, and she grew young and beautiful, but that did not satisfy me. I looked again, and as she spoke of her brother's heart being mechanically broken, while her own, gaping like an earthquake, was morally rent, a strong light dawned on me. I beheld, concealed within all those uncouth features, a sensitive spirit, awkward only because seen through so coarse a mask of clay, but, as known to itself and its Creator, of the finest

and purest essence. It was the unpolished gem of priceless value, which outwardly gave no sign of worth, while within it blazed like the sapphire with its own fires. I was convinced, for the first time, that her feelings were like my own; that they glowed in richest colours, and were influenced by affinities divine. But, thought I, this is not all; this genuine soul is weighed down by sorrows, unsupported by sympathies, confounded with the features, which, neglected and decayed, have no power left to express its beauty, which, when they depict its grief, so mild and lovely within, set up a sign without almost frightful to behold; which, when they embody love still pure and holy as in childhood, erect it upon a smile almost hideous, and looks unsightly.

I learned that Deity knew his own works better: choice and sacred knowledge unto which Adora was my blessed guide. She had always possessed the secret; had found it through mere simplicity of mind, from which all truth takes its level.

How wonderful it was, then, that she should have loved me! But her love was like that of Deity himself; she saw my spirit in its repose, and felt its grandeur; for its errors she had a faith in redemption, which pervades and brings all things round, so they vanished like the phosphoric flame from her sight.

And Angus, not a stranger, there was something in him which must ever be strange: a liberty of existence, a power of mind, a gigantic frame. In him I saw, too, something beyond myself: should I ever reach it?

What an eye he wielded; it was an independent existence pointed like a revolving telescope at passive nature! He despised not the legend; he had implicit belief in the authenticity of traditionary lore. A word or two about the graves of the ancients, uttered by a peasant, carried his penetrating eye through two thousand years. He saw that the uneducated man must inherit what little his fathers knew; that the fathers remembered what their forefathers saw; that, as he receded, the history grew more distinct, and at length hovered round the actual things which it recorded. The clue obtained, he mounted his horse, and was over mountain and valley in search of signs. He saw the winged lions, the sphinx; he won by intelligence, superstitious trust, and bodily labour, what accident only had placed before me. In him I had ever seen the man whose mind as well as body were cast in an heroic mould; and so did they prove to be.

How much more this man saw in the peasant's words than another would have seen; as much more as I saw in the old woman than her fellow-creatures gave her credit for. Consider the result of all this extension of the mental vision; consider how little understood its objects would have remained without it.

On our return we were met by Musonio, into whose arms I sank affectionately, and, the salutation over, I placed the hand of Adora in his, which he pressed reverentially to his lips.

"Alas!" said Musonio, "you have discovered the secret which your father made me promise to tell you; and seeing that you are intent on desecrating the tombs, I lament that the discovery is made. It is a weakness in me, but I cannot overcome it, though I know that all things must be done by turns; nevertheless it grieves me to disturb the dead."

END OF VOL. XIX.